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15 September 1982

# Near East/North Africa Report

No. 2620

STATUS OF WOMEN IN PERSIAN GULF COUNTRIES

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## STATUS OF WOMEN IN PERSIAN GULF COUNTRIES

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## ROLE OF WOMEN IN MODERN GULF SOCIETY

Manama AL-BAHRAIN in Arabic No 662, 19 May 82 pp 15-17

[Article by Ahmad al-Sa'i: "Women in Modern Arabian Gulf Society; Gulf Women Contribute to Economic, Social Activity"]

[Text] The development of education and cultural progress had considerable influence on changing the course of life in the countries of the Arabian Gulf. This development was reflected on women who devoted themselves to the various sciences, learning whatever they wished. The work women do changed and became subject to modern scientific principles. Without advanced education, women could not enter the modern fields of science, as was the case in the past when women used to do their work without following practical, systematic principles.

Gulf women contributed to economic and social activity before the age of awakening in the Gulf. Women contributed to household expenditures by performing some manual labor while men were away at sea during the diving season. Women fished, looked after the fisheries in the sea, worked in trade or taught school in religious schools. In rural areas women farmed, herded sheep, spun yarn, wove clothing and wrote verse. In the desert they made containers for milk and water.

Gulf women studied a considerable number of religious subjects, and this enabled them to teach in religious schools. They held their religious gatherings on the birthdays of holy people. At these gatherings religious songs were sung and prayers were recited. Women also held literary gatherings while they worked on their embroidery. At these gatherings women composed verse, competing with each other in composing the best verse. They also related stories and fables and talked about matters of life.

Amusement halls would be set up in the course of religious holidays, and women would wear their most beautiful clothes and adorn themselves with jewels. They would dance group folk dances to express their joy at the arrival of husbands and relatives in the diving season. Gradually, with the growth and expansion in the scope of education, with the prosperity that followed the discovery of oil, with the [increased] contact between Gulf society and other societies and with the advent of the full awakening new areas of work were opened to women. At the outset of their regular education, women entered the field of teaching and nursing. Through the stages of development women's work was extended to other areas such as medicine, engineering, the police corps and the practice of law and journalism. Women now hold positions in the private sector and in the government.

Today, women hold most leadership positions, except that of minister. Women can also be found in cultural and athletic activities: there are women poets, writers and artists, and there are skillful sportswomen.

#### Women in Bahrain

Education of women in Bahrain began in 1928. Women were able to enter the field of employment early. Women entered the teaching field in the same year; in 1941 they entered the field of nursing. The number of female workers at that time was only 955. These numbers began to increase quickly; they stood out early in the fifties after a few young, unmarried women were sent abroad to study and returned with new ideas. Besides, social life had undergone progress, and prosperity in the area had become widespread. Women in Bahrain are now engaged in the various fields of work and production: they are engaged in education, in social service, engineering, veterinary medicine, the police corps, public security, journalism and the media. The Public Sector's Labor and Social Security Law enacted in Bahrain in 1976 gave women all the rights that would guarantee their future during and after employment.

Three young unmarried women were appointed labor inspectors in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to monitor conditions for working women and the extent to which laws were enforced to protect women.

The highest position held by a Bahraini woman is that of director. Bahraini women pursue different hobbies, and many of them have become outstanding in art, literature and poetry. Bahraini women have numerous works which are published in newspapers and magazines. Recently a Bahraini female poet published a volume of her poetry.

In 1976 the number of women employed in the governmental sector amounted to 27 percent. In 1979, five percent were employed in the private sector.

#### Women in Kuwait

Because of the rapid upswing that took place in Kuwaiti society, Kuwaiti women were able to make their mark in all areas ever since their entry into the field of education and employment early in the fifties and until today. Kuwaiti women are teachers, physicians, journalists, businesswomen and artists. They hold leadership positions as deputy minister, dean of a university college, director of a women's college, inspector general and Ministry of Oil official; and [they serve on] the boards of directors of many corporations. A young, unmarried Kuwaiti woman was chosen director of the Language Center at the University of Kuwait and a fellow of the Royal Asian Society of Britain and Ireland.

In 1979 Kuwaiti women's contribution to the work force was 3.2 percent. Despite this small ratio of participation, Kuwaiti women are educated and hold graduate degrees. Statistics indicate that in 20 years the number of literate Kuwaiti women grew more than tenfold, and 85 percent of Kuwaiti women were opposed to the notion that women cannot carry out the responsibilities and burdens of employment in the various professions.

## Women in Saudi Arabia

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia official education for girls began in 1960; it was restricted to the elementary stage. Then middle schools and secondary schools were opened, and these were followed by intermediary and technical institutes. In 1973 university colleges of education were opened [to women].

Saudi women work in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. Statistics indicate that 50 percent of the women employed in this sector are in the various ranks. The ratio of married women who are employed, which is more than two thirds that of unmarried women, attracts attention. This refutes opinions which state that marriage and household affairs impede women's work. Saudi women also work in other areas such as the media, radio, television, the press and nursing. Although Saudi women have earned graduate degrees, the scope of work for them is limited. The Women's Bank which was opened in Jiddah in 1980 is the first bank of its kind. It is managed by women, and it enables women to work in the financial field which they studied in school.

## Women in the United Arab Emirates

In 1972 after the Emirates became a federation, women's work, which in the past had been confined to teaching, went beyond that to include various aspects of employment. Young, unmarried women were no longer satisfied with a secondary school education; they attended Arab and foreign universities, and they specialized in various scientific disciplines.

About 43 young, unmarried women are employed in the Ministry of the Interior as investigators, policewomen and civil servants. Women work as department directors in the Ministry of Agriculture and Planning, and they work as announcers, journalists and actresses on the stage.

## Women in Qatar

Women's education began in 1955 when the first school [for girls] was opened in the city of Doha. There were 50 female students in the school, and they were taught by one teacher. As time went by, the number of schools increased; so far, there are 68 schools for girls, and these schools have more than 17,306 students. Many women in Qatar earned bachelor's degrees in law and in sociology as well as degrees in information. Large numbers of women in Qatar are employed in the Ministry of Education, in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, in the Ministry of Health and in other ministries.

## Women in Oman

Women in Oman make up almost 49 percent of the population. Statistics indicate that the number of girls' schools increased since 1970, amounting to 720 schools. Statistics also indicate that the number of female students rose. The government of Oman opened up 52 illiteracy centers; in 1976 there were 535 female students enrolled in those centers.

Omani women held responsible positions in various ministries and departments of government. They've also held positions of merit, semi-official positions and positions in police departments, banks, corporations and in the diplomatic corps.



In 1978 the number of female civil servants in Oman in the various ministries and departments of government amounted to 805.

In another area Omani women share farming work with Omani men. Rural women work in the fields and orchards: they operate machinery, irrigate the crops and harvest the plants for household use or for sale. A small number of women in rural areas can drive cars and own private automobiles.

Women of Omani origin and nationality who emigrated from Zanzibar after being expelled from that country in the aftermath of the revolution that occurred there lived for a period of time in countries of the Arabian Gulf. With their more liberal background or their higher level of education these women were able to obtain most of the employment opportunities that were made available to women in Oman.

Now then, Gulf women have a prominent position now in the international community by way of their participation in international conferences and meetings and the contributions they made to the resolutions made at these international conferences. In this regard women's societies in the Gulf states emerge as the ones carrying the burdens of social and volunteer work. These are the Bahrain Women's Progress Society, which was established in 1960; the Bahrain Red Crescent Society; the Family Planning Society; the Kuwaiti Women's Cultural and Social Society; the Kuwaiti Young Women's Club; the Public Association of Iraqi Women; the Emirates' Women's Association; and the Umm al-Qaywayn Society.

These societies carry out charitable activities: they educate women so they can enroll in school; they disseminate health and cultural awareness among rural women; and they revive popular heritage by developing the folk costumes of Gulf women.

Gulf women take part in Arab and international conferences, and they also host women's conferences. Most of these societies are members of international women's organizations.

Gulf countries publish women's magazines that devote their attention to women's affairs. Such magazines are the Kuwaiti USRATI [My Family] magazine; the Qatari AL-JAWHARAH [The Jewel] magazine; SAWT AL-MAR'AH [Women's Voice] magazine in the Emirates; ZAHRAH AL-KHALIJ [Flower of the Gulf]; and MAJALLAH AL-MAR'AH AL-'IRAQIYAH WA AL-'UMANIYAH [Iraqi and Omani Women's Magazine].

As [an indirect] result of the educational standard achieved by Gulf women after they fortified themselves with education and entered the field of employment, a set of social changes emerged. These changes affected women's lives indirectly. In most Gulf states women achieved a sort of independence: they can travel alone; they can ride buses and taxicabs; they can drive cars; and they can work for themselves. Women are now interested in the education of their children; they assume responsibilities; and they make decisions.

The ratio of polygamy declined, and men are satisfied with one wife as a result of the high cost of living and the understanding [they gained] of the social disadvantages that result from polygamy. Women refuse to share their marriage with another woman, and young women are consulted, and their opinions about marriage are taken. In most cases marriage takes place with the agreement of both

parties. This has also led to the decline of marriages that were arranged by an intermediary or a matchmaker.

Women do not differ from men in the interest they have in themselves, in their families and in their homes. Women are interested in following proper scientific methods in caring for their children and, like most men, they look for methods to improve the standards of their families. Most men try to influence women--their sisters, wives or daughters--so they can share with them the burdens of living. It is hoped that Gulf women will achieve their goal, reach the required standard and enter broader fields.

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## MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT WOMEN'S ISSUES EXPLORED

### Social, Economic Misconceptions Discussed

Kuwait AL-TALI'AH No 740, 21 Apr 82 pp 27-34

[Part One of Article by Dr 'Abd-al-Basit 'Abd-al-Mu'ti]

[Text] There has been much talk here and there recently about women's issues. Evidence of local, national and international interest in women's issues appeared. Studies were published; debates were held; courses of study were offered; meeting sessions were adjourned; and recommendations were announced. Preparations are now underway for other meetings. Although one appreciates everything that has been said, it is hoped that these studies will continue, that they will be linked with each other and that they will accumulate. These studies may lead to further probes into the problems of Arab women and a true understanding of these problems, whatever their location, from the Gulf to the [Atlantic] Ocean.

However, anyone who scrutinizes most of the literature about women's issues and examines it in the light of the scientific method and according to its rules can make a number of quick observations. [The following] are among these:

1. Much of that literature was almost preoccupied with descriptions of the conditions of Arab women, including, of course, Gulf women. These descriptive accounts were almost restricted to the numerical dimensions of women's education and employment and other opportunities in society. The descriptive accounts compared the ratios of women's employment and illiteracy with those of men in order to conclude that opportunities for men had been and still were greater and more varied.<sup>1</sup> In other instances the descriptive accounts focused on the change in the ratios of women's employment and work. Consequently, it becomes clear that opportunities for women are becoming greater every day.<sup>2</sup>

2. Other studies, which frequently did not ignore figures and their glitter, set forth in their conclusions a number of actions that ought to be taken regarding the opportunities that must be made available to women in the light of measurable trends.

The conclusions set forth in these studies were dissimilar. Some of them blamed Arab men, putting them on trial and convicting them, and some of them blamed women for their passivity, for not proving their worth and for not taking

advantage of the opportunities that were given to them. Some of these conclusions concerned themselves with describing the deteriorating conditions of women, but many of these conclusions began and ended with these conditions without objectively taking any steps beyond them. Those who tried to take such steps overstepped reality and called for those conditions that ought to exist without providing a descriptive account of a planned course of action that would begin with the status quo and change it through a plan for society.<sup>3</sup> Although there are some exceptions to these research trends, the scarcity of empirical studies that are theoretically and methodologically proper has led to [the following]:

1. More confusion has been added to [the effort to] define women's issues. Sometimes the question is asked, "What do Arab women want?" "What do Arab women want from men?" "What is it that women have to do?" "Is the question one for men and women, or is it a question for society?"

2. Well-intentioned or ill-intentioned interpretations varied. One interpretation was based on the al-Salafiyah Islamic reform movement [which was founded by Muhammad 'Abduh in Egypt]; there was a biological interpretation, and there was a psychological interpretation. There was a partial interpretation that focused on one particular dimension or relationship, and there was a comprehensive interpretation--although these were rare--that attributed matters to their social and historical origins. But what is rather serious about all this is how one or another interpretation is used. It is this that has obliterated many features of the truth, creating misconceptions about women and women's issues. In fact, a few educated Arab women have consciously or unconsciously contributed to this.

For all these [reasons] and others which cannot be mentioned here for lack of space, this study will attempt to reveal some aspects of the false statements that have been made [in this regard]. It may help bring about a more scientific and a more realistic reformulation of some of the ideas and issues.

But before we go further, it is important to call attention to two matters. First, talking about Arab women in general or Gulf women in particular must not be done separately. Gulf women are not "marvelous creatures;" nor are they anomalies among Arab women. They share most of their concerns with Arab women, with [a few] exceptions that are more numerical than qualitative.

Second, the scarcity of realistic research and studies and even statistical data about conditions of Gulf women makes it scientifically imperative that studies pertaining to Arab women in general be taken into account. [Thus we hope to] benefit from the general in understanding the specific.

## Second, on Conceptions and Misconceptions of Gulf Women

In order to define the notion of perception and, consequently, perceptions of Gulf women, we must determine a number of basic theoretical questions that would help us proceed on this course. It may be that among the most important of these questions are those which may be listed as follows:

1. Social perceptions, which naturally comprise perceptions of Gulf women, are determined basically by the conditions and the chronological period of the makeup of society. This means that the structural mode which prevails at a specific

historical period of development as well as the development of this structure affect and define perceptions of women. Accordingly, those perceptions have a relative relationship to the characteristics of prevailing social relations. Chief among these relations are relations of production, which constitute an independent variable that affects or rather formulates other social relations and processes in society.

2. Such perceptions have a measure of relative independence. They may lag behind the conditions of society's makeup if factors were to interfere and keep such perceptions from staying in step with the makeup of society. Perceptions may be ahead of the conditions of society's makeup if there are factors helping to bring about such progress, especially when there is an educated elite that can foresee what lies ahead in the future.

3. Talking about perceptions of women in terms of an absolute and an abstract matter ignores many categorical differences that exist between one woman and another in the light of each woman's socio-economic conditions. One notices that these particulars and categorical distinctions do not deny the existence of common, general particulars that are affected by the historical makeup of society as a whole.

4. In order to define perceptions of Gulf women more scientifically, we must distinguish between present perceptions of women<sup>4</sup> and perceptions of what is possible and probable. This is what George Lukash did.<sup>4</sup> The former are current observable perceptions with their flaws, as such perceptions are shaped by social, economic and cultural conditions. These perceptions may be true, portraying a situation truthfully and objectively and describing it and explaining it. They may also be false when false methods are applied to prevent [the formulation of] objective, true perceptions of the status of women. Perceptions of what is possible and probable are future ones. They go beyond the current false cover, if such a false cover exists, exposing it and reaching out to the past and the present, not to coexist with them and embrace them, but rather to go beyond them to another future aspiration whose aim is to promote people's capabilities--the capabilities of any person and all persons as creatures different from all others. These perceptions of what is possible remain true unless social forces intervene and are set deliberately to falsify future plans.

To bring the image of description and categorization closer to the modes of perception, it may be said that existing perceptions of Gulf women are those which describe them as weak, emotional creatures who are constantly in need of someone to guard them and supervise them. Meanwhile, perceptions of what is possible for women are those which see women as beings who have capabilities that other beings have and citizens who have the rights and duties that other citizens have. Women are not distinguished from other human beings or citizens by any factors of social, cultural or birth differences. This is because when these differences exist, they are necessarily attributable to the surrounding milieu. When human beings--males or females--come into this world, they are all born equal whenever, wherever and to whomever they are born. But as social time goes by, differences between one child and another become more pronounced. They grow according to each child's family, its social standing, its milieu and the period of time. This leaves its mark on one or another society.

True perceptions of Gulf women are those which concern themselves faithfully, fervently and knowledgeably with describing existing conditions of Gulf women and attributing these conditions in explaining them to the real active origins that produced them. At the same time such true perceptions must seek to overcome these conditions and move towards broader horizons that are compatible with the characteristics of women as human beings and citizens and with the requirements of the renovation and change which are being sought for the benefit of human beings, all human beings, in any location of any kind.<sup>5</sup>

The values dimension in this perception is meant to be oriented toward equality and justice for citizens of the same society. The existential perception is meant to reveal the real capabilities of every person, both those that are anticipated and those that are not. At the same time it is to uncover the social and individual existence which falsifies and impairs these capabilities. The dimension of knowledge in this perception is meant to require that objective, scientific knowledge provide examples that illustrate cases where misconceptions about women exist.

Briefly, perceptions of Gulf women may be defined as the product of prevailing and common ideas and images about women which are fostered by the process of social conditioning, education and the media. These perceptions portray women's capabilities, their relations with others and their rights and duties. They are determined by the structural mode that is prevalent in Gulf society and by the disparate socio-economic conditions of Gulf women.<sup>6</sup> On the other complementary side categorical perceptions of Gulf women are meant to convey women's image, their view of themselves and their understanding of their rights and their duties. These are determined by women's social position in Gulf society's system of production.

### Third, Gulf Women and the Mode of Social Production

The particulars of the structural mode of production in the Gulf do not differ from the general rhythm of the structural mode of Arab society even though some quantitative differences among a few of its characteristics can be observed. Like other secondary structural modes in Arab society, the structural mode of production in the Gulf is one that is capitalistic and subordinate. It is steered by the commercial bourgeoisie which determines its production, investment, consumption and thought trends. The fact that it is a capitalist mode means that it is controlled by private ownership. The fact that it is subordinate means that it relies on foreign countries and adopts import and export activities as its principal activities. Because it is controlled by the commercial bourgeoisie, it is anti-production and pro-trade. [It favors] activities that are oriented to consumers and those that support trade activities and do not depart from their framework, such as banking and real estate. The particulars in which this mode differs quantitatively from the Arab social structure manifest themselves in [the following]:

1. The relative power of the commercial bourgeoisie and the domination of their commercial activity.
2. The most significant activity of this class is [its effort] to take on the features of the opulent class. It is influencing and formulating social and cultural

life in light of its interests, its ideas and the modes of its conduct. It does so in a manner that approximates the substantiated conclusions described by Veblen in his famous work, "The Theory of the Leisure Class."<sup>8</sup>

3. In an overall analysis the art of production appears to be lagging due to the decline in the process of production at a time when the dazzling and thrilling art of consumption is rising.

4. The notion of work as an issue and an ethic, especially productive social work, takes a back seat to that of earning a living and increasing one's income. This is a result of the control exercised by trade whose images and values affect the human and social significance of work.

What is worth noting here is the fact that the categorical characteristics which distinguish the mode of production in the Gulf [from the mode of production elsewhere] are reflected on the conditions of people--men and women--in the area. They define their relations with each other, especially with regard to their class status.

#### Women's Conditions in the Gulf and Class Relations

Although class conditions play an important role in depicting, defining and understanding many of society's problems in the Gulf countries, objective scientific studies about this matter are noticeably scarce and absent. Existing attempts to study the matter are hidden behind other subjects, and they are predominantly descriptive. Because social studies about Gulf societies--considering the published literature that is available--are still at an early stage and because a considerable number of what has been published suffers from theoretical and methodological imbalances, even these limited attempts are few and far between, and they differ widely in their directions and solutions.

At any rate, the utmost scientific significance of defining this social aspect requires that an attempt be made to look at that aspect. In doing so, one is to be guided by the most scientific studies that are available. One is to begin with the premises they established which manifest a measure of acceptability.

A. One of the studies about one of the Gulf states holds the view that the socially oriented investment of oil returns led to the expansion of the middle class and that the class of workers has not yet had opportunities for developing and interacting [with other classes] because oil companies relied on imported labor in their operations. The social makeup of society has come to be made up of three basic classes: the commercial bourgeoisie, which has been strengthened and fortified and is occupying the top of the social pyramid. It is followed by the middle class which is made up of average merchants, senior civil servants and intellectuals. Finally, [there is] the lower class<sup>9</sup> which is made up of civil servants, custodians, clerks and people like them.

B. Another study attempted to distinguish in the course of its analysis of the social structure of the Gulf between three basic classes. At the bottom were the workers who had not yet been formed into a class, except for a few exceptions that had to do with Bahrain.<sup>10</sup> This is due to the decline in production operations. The conditions of this class have a few characteristics, the most

prominent of which is the fact that people of this class sell their work for a monetary wage. They are also not a homogeneous group, for they include [in their midst] small groups of government and private sector employees and service workers. In addition, family and tribal affiliations exercise a hold on this group, and this hold impedes the growth of broader affiliations. Moving upwards from this group come the middle class communities which include top officials in government and in corporations as well as small entrepreneurs. Although this group represents the majority of the population, it is not a homogeneous group in its positions on production relations or in its social characteristics with regard to changes in development. Finally, at the top of the social pyramid comes the upper commercial class. It is almost the most homogeneous class and the one that is most conscious of its interests. Therefore, it is the class that is most influential in shaping social life.

Before some of the differences in the conditions of Gulf women are portrayed by critically examining their class positions, it is important to call attention to two important points in defining these positions which rely on a scientific definition of a social class through the distribution of property and one's position in the social division of labor.

#### The First [Point]

Conditions of Gulf women in light of the distribution of capital assets appear to be quite untenable. It is certain that the weak position of women is related to the opportunities they have in society, especially their relationship to power and having power. The weak position of women is also related to other forms of participation in society. Female employers or self-employed women are no more than 0.3 percent. In Bahrain, they make up 0.27 percent of <sup>11</sup>women; in the Emirates, they make up 0.26 percent of all women in the work force.

#### The Second [Point]

Women's total participation in the work force as an indication of their position in the social distribution and organization of labor is also very limited. For example, in the Emirates women make up 3.36 percent of the labor force compared to men who make up 96.64 percent. In Bahrain they make up 5.39 percent of the labor force, compared with men who make up 94.61 percent.<sup>12</sup>

However, in light of the few studies that have already been referred to about class categories in Gulf societies and in view of the fact that the capital assets owned by Gulf women are mixed with those which their families own, before or after marriage, the classification of Gulf societies into three classes--upper, middle and lower--can be accepted, despite its shortcomings.

#### 1. Affluent Women in the Distinguished Commercial Bourgeoisie

Although this is the smallest group numerically, women in this group are more influential than other women. This situation is aided and abetted by the misconceptions that exist about women, by the dominance of the consumer mode and by the dominance of the media which support that mode. Some segments of women in the middle classes imitate the behavior and appearance of these affluent women. One notices [the following] about women of this class:



A. They are consumers, and the wealthier their families are before or after marriage, the more their consumption tends to be conspicuous and wasteful. Conspicuous and wasteful consumption by these women is encouraged by the social milieu around them which even makes up additional forms of consumption.

B. They are the ones who advertise a family's wealth by displaying it, advertising it and creating a reputation for it. Thus, the economic function of these women is drawn more to this role than to others because the leisure activities in which they become engaged are not simply manifestations of unemployment and laziness. These activities masquerade in the form of household duties, setting up banquets and meeting social obligations.

--Women's wardrobes provide the best example of their conditions. Women's wardrobes advertise their families' financial standing and wealth as well as their own roles and contributions. The interest in clothing, accessories and jewelry comes from the fact that these are the first things seen by an observer that provide testimony of a family's wealth. Also the form and the heel of shoes, belts, etc. indicate the status of women's employment. All these are indications of women's subordination to men; they emphasize appearance and not substance; and they promote a limited, narrow notion of femininity. Accordingly, despite all the opulence these women enjoy, they are more like agents who, when economic jobs were distributed, were charged with the task of displaying their masters' ability to spend.

C. Despite the fact that a number of these women are not employed, they are more careful about having servants because having servants upholds the family's wealth. Women can thus make up for and give vent to some forms of their subordination because servants are not only expected to display noteworthy submission to their mistresses, but they are also [expected] to do so with an elegance that would become the subject of conversation and boasting.

D. Social values in this class converge so that women would be raised in a way that their highest hopes would be to marry and to have children, especially male children. Marriage criteria are defined in terms of financial compatibility with the condition of a woman's family. A suitor should guarantee his [prospective wife] a financial standard that is no less than that of her family.

E. When some of these affluent women participate in some social activities, such as charitable societies or similar organizations, their involvement with these activities takes place in terms of their view of these activities as fashion shows and [opportunities] for showing off possessions. When these women do something, it is charitable and donated; what they do is not national in character. It may be that the failure of some women's societies to develop and reach society by means of a social movement can be attributed, at least in part, to the authority some of these women exercise over these societies. Some of these societies have even been closed in various Arab areas because these same women did not get to serve on their boards of directors. Because of the influence some of these women have on male decision makers, these societies have been thwarted in form and perhaps in substance as well.

F. Because women of this class have limited horizons that are imposed on their upbringing and perceptions, they become nothing more than objects with which men

complement the social framework in which they move. Although they have no financial problems, they do have psychological and social problems. Like objects that can be acquired, men can acquire more women in this capacity, and they can put them all to work as long as men have the ability to spend money.

## 2. Women in the Middle Classes

Due to differences that exist in these middle classes of Arab society in general and Gulf societies in particular, one does not expect to find only one image of women. Generally speaking, however, when one goes beyond details and particulars, one finds that women in the middle classes suffer from the fact that many perceptions of women and women's roles are two-sided.

A. As far as social roles and expectations are concerned and the duties and rights that each one of these expectations entails, we find women torn between their role in society, in employment, in other forms of participation and activities in their communities and sometimes in volunteer activities, and their role in the family which is still burdened<sup>15</sup> in part by the effects of their upbringing in the past and of past values. If we were to look carefully into the milieu surrounding each kind of roles which women play, we would find obstacles that affect efficiency. Work hours conflict with household chores and affect the time when women would leave and come back to the family. The presence of children and the requirements of their upbringing place psychological burdens on women. When they are at work, they are in a hurry to go back home; and when they are at home, they are in a hurry to go to work. Generally speaking, facilities [that are available] in society affect these roles. Women, especially working women, experience role conflicts many times because of the scarcity and problems of domestic workers; because of the high cost of electrical appliances and other necessities of life; because of the shortage in the number and quality of day care services; because of men's view of working women; and because men do not contribute to household chores.

It may be that flaws or failures in some of these roles or their aspects are making some men and women put the blame on women's entry into the labor force. They do not take into account the fact that women have to work; nor do they take into account the other challenges in society that bring about these flaws or failures. Besides, families discriminate in bringing up their children: they expect women to play certain roles and deny them others, despite the fact that both men and women need to develop new ideas about their roles that are consistent with their surroundings and their future aspirations.

B. Regarding values and intellectual trends we find women torn between an independent view of themselves and their social need for a mate who would protect them from society's views and values. They are torn between their desire to prepare and educate themselves and their interest in clothing and appearance. They are torn between the desire to maintain an income and an economic standard that are suitable for the family and their aspirations for [keeping up with] the upper classes and the methods of consumption that are common in these classes. When they want a brisk business, a number of businesswomen will set themselves up in "boutiques" and clothing stores and beauty shops. Although they may be members in some societies, the market mentality and the search for what is more profitable makes them, at least on the surface, torn in a conflict between what

they say and what they actually take part in doing since the goods they are selling are tied to a specific role for women that emphasizes their femininity.

C. Regarding their conduct, women in this class are found to be calling for more rights. But under the burden of conditions in society, they actually refrain from practicing some of the rights that have been given to them. Women are asking for participation in the political process, but few of them take part in elections, even those that are held in cultural and charitable societies.

D. Women here are not the only ones who suffer from this dual [role] and from this conflict. Those who infrequently become convinced that women should be liberated, should be allowed to work and should be educated are also found to be impeding women's performance of these roles. They even place restrictions and burdens on women and harshly call them to account for delays, for their clothing and for their activities.

E. Both men and women of this class are products of their environment which harbors opposites and places restrictions that produce contradictions between words and deeds.

F. Alienation may be the most serious [problem] from which women in the middle classes suffer, especially working women. They are surrounded by social pressures and ideas, and their opportunities for higher wages and advancement are limited. In addition, this alienation is beset by the conflicts they experience between going ahead and holding back. We do not exaggerate when we<sup>16</sup> say that women experience frustrations daily at home, on the street and at work.

### 3. Women in the Lower Classes

Women in the lower classes share with men their concerns about life and [their effort to] preserve the family's jobs and satisfy its essential needs. Both represent the bottom [layer of society] where all kinds of oppression and exploitation settle. Women in the lower classes are less fortunate in education and in work conditions. Whether their roles are confined to the home or whether they work outside the home, these women mostly perform the most arduous and the most tiresome jobs. These women and their families have nothing to do but sell their efforts for subsistence wages. They are at the mercy of supply and demand and the harsh and lowly conditions of labor. Sometimes work is not permanent; that is, it is seasonal. Some women of this class work without contracts and without insurance for the future, after retirement, or health and old age insurance. Their objectives are simple and limited: they want to satisfy the basic needs of their families in light of what is available. They are not concerned about women's rights or about women's participation in the political process. It is not because of inherent and inborn conditions that these matters do not concern women in the lower classes, but it is rather because of social pressures: illiteracy, the influence of customs, superstitions and limited income. Their hopes do not go beyond educating and bringing up their children, and they are satisfied with what is available.

# FOOTNOTES

1. "Adwa' 'Ala Mashakil al-Mar'ah al-'Amilah" [Insights into the Problems of Working Women] by Dr Samih 'Abd-al-Fattah; Kuwait: Dar al-Bayan, 1972.
2. The Economic Committee for West Asia, "Modern Changes and Directions in the Status of Women in West Asia: a Report to the Preliminary Regional Meeting of the International Conference on the UN Decade for Women," Damascus: 10-13 December 1979.
3. See examples of these ideas in the collection of articles entitled "The Concerns of Arab Women," in AL-MUSTAQBAL AL-'ARABI [The Arab Future] Magazine, May 1978 pp 155-166.

[Footnote No 4 missing.]

5. Dr Ghali Shukri, "al-Muftaraq: al-Inhiyar aw 'Asr Nahdawi Jadid" [The Crossroads: Collapse or a New Age of Awakening] in DIRASAT 'ARABIYAH [Arab Studies] Magazine; Beirut: October, 1980; pp 3-18.
6. See "Marxism" by G Luckas for some definitions of social awareness; in "Knowledge and Social Structure" edited by P. Hamilton. London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1974; pp 37-54.
7. For [more on] modes of social awareness see "A Dictionary of Philosophy" edited by M Rosenthal and P Yudin; Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1967; pp 411-412. See also Luckas, op. cit., p 45.
8. T. Veblen, "Theory of the Leisure Class," translated by Mahmud Musa; Political and Socialist Thought Series; Cairo: The Egyptian [Publishing] House for Writing and Translating.
9. Dr Badr al-Din al-Khususi, "Studies in the Social and Economic History of Kuwait from 1913 to 1961;" Kuwait, the Publishing and Distribution Company, 1972; p 404.
10. Dr Muhammad Ghanim al-Ramihi, "Issues of Social and Political Change in Bahrain;" Kuwait, al-Wihdah Organization for Publishing and Distributing, 1976; pp 243-244.
11. The Arab Statistical Group, The Arab League, 1977, Tables 1-12.
12. Ibid. It is worth noting that many of the conclusions that are mentioned about the conditions of women across the board were made on the basis of indirect studies as well as conclusions and observations made by others and by the researcher. Upon analysis, therefore, they are closer to being impressions that require scientific selection and support.
13. For these meanings and ideas see Veblen, op. cit., pp 44-65.
14. Ibid., pp 111-118.

15. Regarding this meaning see "Sex Discrimination and Social Development" by Dr Mu'in Khalil 'Umar in DIRASAT 'ARABIYAH Magazine; Beirut: November 1980; pp 192-170.
16. From an analysis by Faridah al-Naqqash published in the collection of articles, "The Concerns of Arab Women," AL-MUSTAQBAL AL-'ARABI Magazine, op. cit.

#### Misconceptions in Research, Literature Discussed

Kuwait AL-TALI'AH in Arabic No 741, 28 Apr 82 pp 29-36

[Part Two of Article by Dr 'Abd-al-Basit 'Abd-al-Mu'ti]

[Text] Fourth, Some Illustrations of Misconceptions about Women

##### 1. Women's Problems and Scientific Research

By looking carefully into the social research that has been completed in the Gulf area, especially those studies that directly or indirectly devoted their attention to women, we can make the following observations:

A. Women were absent in many of the studies that have been completed. Although some of these studies dealt with some questions that pertain to women, they dealt with them in a secondary and marginal fashion in the course of describing and analyzing the makeup of the population and the labor force. This was done to explain the number of women compared to that of men and to determine the rate of women's illiteracy, education and participation in the labor force.<sup>1</sup> In most cases these studies lacked the insights that could explain these results.

B. Although they are limited, most of the studies that concerned themselves with families in the Gulf relied on male heads of households in gathering their data. Women were even excluded from some matters where it was necessary to find out what their opinions, their inclinations and their values were.<sup>2</sup>

C. Some social studies, even those that were carried out by women, excluded women from their research<sub>3</sub> samples under the pretext of providing some conditions to control methodology.

D. Even some of the studies that concerned themselves with women focused their attention on studying women [in a vacuum], separated from their social surroundings and their daily lives. They compared women with men, or they compared women's conditions in the various classes. For example, when working women are being studied, the emphasis of the study was on the problems of working women and their productivity and on the effects their employment had on their family roles. When results were compiled without a historical comparison or when these results were compared with those of men in the same regard, a hasty observer could think that the negative social conditions which accompanied women's venture into the field of work outnumbered the positive. Consequently, these studies cast doubts about even the self-evident importance of women venturing out into the field of work, and they demanded that women return to the home without analyzing and explaining the factors that have a bearing on these problems. It is known that if

studies were designed to compare women's work and productivity and the areas in which they spend their leisure with the work and productivity of men and the areas in which they spend their leisure, it may become evident to us that men and women are similar in some matters because they are both the product of the socio-economic milieu which surrounds them. In fact a number of men have become experts in [the art of] wasting time at work and outside work, in the home and in coffee shops, etc. Basically, there are still important studies that have neither been completed nor contemplated. In these studies women would be studied in the context of their surroundings; their conditions would be compared throughout the periods of history; their conditions would be compared in the classes of a specific society; and their conditions would be compared under modern and contemporary social and political systems.

Among the most serious [features] of these partial and truncated studies that are common is the contribution they make to the distortions and false interpretations that are made about the status of women. These interpretations are quite far from the basic factors that produce, support and preserve this material reality [for women]. Some common issues [that come up] in the course of showing interest in women's problems may provide evidence of this. We will refer to some of these in a little while.

To clarify further the condition of studies that have to do with Gulf women, we can raise the following questions to ascertain whether or not there were any studies that responded to them.

1. What are the modes of social conditioning used by the various classes for males and females?
2. What are the contents of academic curricula in the various stages of education from their perspective and point of view of women's questions?
3. What are the inclinations of Gulf women across the board of social differences toward the questions of women and the questions of society?
4. What is the condition of the services that are offered to women in accordance with a socio-educational chart? [This should] determine the kinds of services offered to illiterate women, to homemakers and to educated women, etc.
5. Have evaluative studies been made of either development programs for women or of the laws that have to do with their rights and their duties in the family, in the place of employment, in education, etc.?
6. Has practical, experimental research been carried out for the purpose of designing a socio-educational program to change women's views of themselves and other people's views of them?

The list [of questions] can go on. However, what is more important is the fact that a specialized research center is still needed that would devote its attention to the questions and conditions of women and the experiments of their development.

## 2. Women in Works of Literature and Art

It is evident that the most common model for literary and artistic production at a certain stage in particular in the development of any society is influenced by the model of social relations in that society, by the characteristics that control that society and by those who make the decisions that affect that society's cultural and political course. Because of the control they exercise over Gulf society, the commercial bourgeoisie and their interests, chief among which is profit, affect not only the execution of literary and artistic works, but also [the attention] devoted to certain models in particular. This even affects the creative process. In fact, the literature and the art that go along with commercial activity turn into commodities which strengthen cultural values and preserve the essence of the status quo. In the search for profit, because the appeal to instincts is the easiest way to attract citizens who have misconceptions, explicit or oblique sex becomes a principal subject in literary and artistic works. No matter how varied their forms, artistic works--especially movies--and literary works do not go beyond [depicting] the love triangle: a man and two women or two men and a woman. The sight of a woman's body is not enough as a method to attract the public. Actresses are chosen, for example, and their salaries are determined according to how provocative they can be and what skills they can show in this regard.

Some literary writers proclaimed their support for women; they even urged them to rebel. At the same time we find them careful to achieve some measure of balance to ensure for themselves some measure of popularity and accordingly, distribution and sales for their works. One of the most notable examples of this kind of writer on the Arab scene may be Nizar Qabani.<sup>4</sup> With most literary writers who are deemed progressive the matter becomes greater than a conflict: in dealing with the questions of their societies their<sup>5</sup> view of women does not go beyond that of woman as a marginal and a passive being.

Such trends may be affirmed by some data from an Egyptian study on the women's press and its stance on women. Published stories demonstrate a passive image of women, depicting women as beings who are always expecting initiatives to come from outside themselves. They yield to these solutions because they are weak and incapable of making decisions. In addition, they always need support from outside. This support often comes from men, as these published works suggest. This need for support strengthens the need women have to bear children, and they use that to tie their husbands to them. In addition, these published stories promote [the notion] that women's nature is passive; they suppress their positive qualities and promote the notion that women's emotional nature dominates their reason. They promote other false, commonly held views about women as people and as citizens.

The following table points out the basic plot of a number of the stories included in the analysis.<sup>6</sup>

<u>Title of the Story</u>	<u>The Basic Plot</u>
Al-Dhilal [The Shadows]	It is difficult for a woman to leave her husband even if he has abused her.
Imra'ah Hattamtahah [A Woman I Destroyed]	When a woman falls in love, she surrenders.

Kull Hadha Liannahaw Hawwa' [Because She is a Woman]

As she grows older, woman mourns her lost youth.

Nazrah Fahm [An Understanding Look]

If a woman marries, [her character] is molded according to her husband's wishes.

Ha'it al-Wahm [The Wall of Illusion]

Serious problems develop if a woman has much leisure on her hands.

Laysat Minhun [She Is not One of Them]

A young unmarried woman collapses if her father dies.

Looking closely into some of the social values and meanings that support these factors, it became evident that women's acceptance of everything their husbands do, even when they abuse them, signifies that women are being looked down upon in a manner that diminishes their dignity. It means that women have to submit and yield absolutely in all cases. This also supports the image of men as beings who have an absolute right to take action. The matter of a woman mourning her lost youth also reveals the value society places on women. Their roles in the family are forgotten, and the [service] they gave [their families] in their youth is also forgotten. [They are judged by] their bodies and by the changes that take place over their bodies because of age and the arduous efforts they made. The latter view does not go beyond considering women female beings whose only role is to please men.

What is most serious about these literary and artistic works that dazzle may be the fact that they give males as well as females the impression that they are to accept and approve of these images and even prepare themselves for them. This supports the misconceptions that exist about women not only in the present but also for future generations.

#### Educated Women and Some Lost Positions

There are two points that can provide evidence of the passive role played by educated Gulf women in supporting the dismal image of the misconceptions [that exist] about women. They reveal that women are demanding a set of measures and positions but are not actually contributing to the implementation of these positions or to taking action on the advice that has been given. First, as indicated by some of the results of the few studies that have been completed about the image of women in the media, and as some educated Arab women have occasionally repeated, the image of women in the media is considered responsible, besides other factors, for the declining perceptions of women and for the deliberate distortion of their roles and their duties. Nevertheless, one notices in the works of art on radio and television that those who play the roles of women are women who have had a considerable measure of education. Despite that no appeals are being made to female Arab artists to stop playing these roles. Instead, women's societies themselves are in one way or another encouraging works that assume negative positions on women. Women's societies do not provide material and moral support to help some producers produce works of art that are naturally not propaganda. Such works would explain the other positive dimensions that have been ignored of the roles women play.



Second, we often hear educated women blaming and condemning the methods by which children are brought up and socialized in Arab families. These methods shape children and impress upon them discriminatory sexist values that differentiate between the sexes. When we ask who does the upbringing in the family, we find that the responsibility is shared among family members and that women play a role in that. If one may find all sorts of excuses for illiterate women, how can one find excuses for educated women? Are societies, organizations and female Arab researchers engaged in more serious and practical attempts to prepare an alternative method of socializing children for which training and preparations would begin in the family? There would be programs for this alternative method in school and in the media. This alternative method would develop from research and studies that would determine the best and the most suitable methods for bringing about a change in values and for developing new values that would be oriented toward formulating desirable roles for people, whether they be male or female.

We often read [studies] by Arab female researchers attacking the view of women that sees them as females only and deals with them as commodities and sex objects. The more sensitive question here is this: What women have assumed unequivocal positions against this view? Like other women, the bourgeoisie of the upper and middle classes, these women are the biggest consumers and distributors of cosmetics. Some of them sell these commodities. We do not mean that women are to be placed in a non-caring, playful mold, but that they should establish a balance between this and other forms of conduct, such as education and preparation, venturing upon some forms of conduct and refraining from others. They can thus become role models for others.

#### Fifth, Some Women's Questions: a Flawed Presentation of a Misconception

There are ideas and questions that become widespread and survive not because of their authenticity or soundness, but rather because they are presented repeatedly in an environment that is conducive to their dissemination and their survival. Among these questions are those that have to do with women. Although these questions were presented repeatedly in a flawed and erroneous manner all the way to their false origins, they continue to exist and survive. [The following] are among these questions:

--Formulating women's problems through the dichotomy of men and women.

--Demanding that women become involved in development [programs].

--Going beyond and overstepping the objective material reality in making some proposals to remedy the situation, without beginning with that material reality and setting it to move towards scientific planning.

#### 1. The Dichotomy of Women and Men

The current conditions of Arab women are often explained by stating that they are the result of the historical relationship between men and women and the result of men's exploitation of women. Although one acknowledges that parts of this explanation are sound at a certain level of analysis, making such a statement and going no further with it truncates the question and isolates it from the structured environment that led to this exploitation. If we were to take, for

example, one of the works of an educated Arab woman who advocates the liberation of Arab women--I am referring to Dr Nawal al-Sa'dawi--we would find her concluding one of her studies with the following assertion:

"... The economic independence of women is the first step toward their liberation. This is because women's economic independence from their husbands would give them the opportunity and the power to refuse to be humiliated by them. But economic independence alone is not enough for liberating women. Women need social independence from men so they can live alone without men if that becomes necessary. They need to be personally independent so they can overcome the crises they face with men when they renounce male guardianship and disobey men."

Anyone who looks carefully into such a statement may think that this is a personal question and that the problem was merely one of gender. A person may think that women could soar to unlimited horizons if they were destined to work--regardless of the kind of work they do, their preparation for it and society's need for it, etc., and that women can become independent of men and reject them if they had to live by themselves. The claim that this proposed statement is flawed and even false is based on the fact that the statement focuses on secondary problems and contradictions. It ignores essential contradictions and even equates them with secondary ones. What men are being meant here, and what women?

The fact that one is satisfied in considering the question one of men and women without defining the conditions of each in the basic classes in a specific society and without relating these classes to their structured environment divests women's problems of the fact that they are society's problems and can only be solved by a social movement. Are not relations between men and women reflections of more fundamental exploitative relations that affect social relations as a whole, including men's relations with women? Don't these relations make men's perceptions of themselves and of others--women, for example--and women's perceptions of themselves and of others--men, for example--perceptions that are subordinate to the structured mode and the contradictions involved therein?

Therefore it would be more appropriate and more proper to formulate women's questions and to present them through a women's social movement. The emphasis on women's questions as a social movement would not reduce these questions to a mere personal demand--even though that is legitimate. This emphasis would go beyond that and set forth women's questions in terms of social demands for society and its people, men and women. In order to complete the formulation of women's problems through a social movement, material reality must be carefully diagnosed and truthfully explained by focusing on the essential factors that produced that material reality. Periodic plans must be made to link that reality to the changing future. This requires that women be viewed as human beings and as active and participating citizens. Since every social movement strives earnestly in its demands for a targeted change, and since all the factors of material reality cannot be changed at once, priorities must be determined and the processes of change must be controlled so that positive conditions accompanying this change can be enhanced.

## 2. Involving Women in Development

The question was formulated in this manner; it was published; it was brought to us; and we accepted it. It was an international formulation, and an announcement was made at the source that an attempt had been made to neutralize it so it can be widely accepted on the occasion of the Women's Decade which is being sponsored by the United Nations. Although many explanations and justifications for the manner in which the problem was formulated are well-founded, they are still somewhat mysterious, and questions that may clarify at least some of the mystery have to be asked.

A. Doesn't the formulation signify at least implicitly that development is at first designed by men and that women then become involved in it? Doesn't this characterize such development as sexually biased as a result of the fact that the matter is mostly confined to nothing more than the relationship between men and women?

B. Doesn't the formulation also mean that development for society can be devised [even though] the minds, spirits and roles of half that society are kept away?

C. Does this formulation also mean, among other things, that what does actually exist in Arab society is considered real development and that we have to manage it as it is and then involve women in it? Doesn't what exists and is existing in Arab society go beyond partial improvements for emergency problems here and there, and doesn't it leave the essence [of these problems] unchanged with the evident signs of backwardness that entails? Women's conditions are considered the best example and evidence of this.

As long as a rather considerable number of researchers thinks that existing conditions for Arab women are the product of conditions in society,<sup>10</sup> another development model will be needed. In that model women would constitute a basic and a fundamental part of the plan's human resources. Women must prepare themselves and participate [in the effort] to complete the new objectives of development.

The gist of what we want to emphasize here is that an alternative development model is needed to attend to women's problems and to other problems in society, provided that this model at least seek to mobilize human and material resources. This model is to turn inward and to adopt collective self-reliance as a starting point for the achievement of an Arab development that would reduce subordination to foreign countries as much as possible.

The formulation of women's problems through a social women's movement that extends to men may be a matter suitable for the mutual cooperation of men and women in the oppressed segments and classes [of society]. The objective here would be to mobilize everyone for the alternative development.

It could thus be said that overcoming the narrow-minded formulation of women's problems as the product of relations between men and women and seeing these problems in terms of a social movement with a dual pattern--the first aspect of this pattern would focus on women's specific problems and the extensions of these in society in general, and the second aspect would focus on the specific effects

social problems have on women's problems--will help bring about a greater measure of specific and general gains for women. This would begin with material reality and move from there to go beyond it.

### 3. Overstepping Reality in Presenting Questions and Solutions to These Questions

It is easy for one to call enthusiastically for a set of actions that ought to be taken and to demand one thing or another for women without taking the given factors and challenges of reality into consideration. This makes such appeals futile: the passions they generate fade and dissipate, and the reactions [they create] end overnight. To bring the image closer to home, we will present an example of what is common in the course of discussions about Arab women.

In her article, "Toward a New Role for Women in Arab Society," Dr Safiyyah Sa'adah pointed out the following:<sup>11</sup>

Dr Sa'adah began her study by emphasizing that every study of the problems women have in the Arab homeland ultimately leads to a study of the problems of the Arab homeland itself. The question of women is closely tied to a more general and a more comprehensive question: the question of Arab individuals and communities and the question of the material reality, aspirations and hopes of Arab society. After this prefatory, or more precisely, after this all-encompassing question, Dr Sa'adah tried to explain how Arab women came to be in the situation they are in and have such a passive and a low perception of themselves. She tried to deal with this by offering a quick view of the historical stages of the rise of the family. Then she referred to the educational, legal, economic and political aspects of the condition of Arab women in society. She concluded [by outlining] the features of the new role she is proposing for women, at least as the title of the article suggests. The most important features of that role are as follows:

1. Values are not eternal; they are relative, and they change as economic and social conditions change. Thus, traditional values must be reconsidered.
2. In practical terms we must treat our children equally. There is to be no discrimination between boys and girls.
3. In education, we have to offer identical programs to both sexes; we have to think of new courses to develop their personalities; and then we have to emphasize coeducational schools.
4. Regarding areas of work, opportunities must be equal. Society has to solve the problem of day care for children and that of numerous household responsibilities.
5. Women have to abandon their indifference and go into politics because it is there that power lies. Women's refusal to become involved in political matters is similar [to the attitude] of ostriches who bury their heads in the sand.

If we were to focus on the essence of what has been said, we would find that the presentation of the role that was described as new does not cover the whole question with which the writer had begun. In fact, she abandoned that question and went beyond it to come to partial proposals that do not define the method by which change can be brought about in every aspect. This is a result of

explanations that are one-dimensional. When the writer advocates the necessity of changing values, she does not explain who is to make the change. Is it to be made by those who have power, wealth and authority? They will not hear. Are men to bring about the change? How will they concede? Why is she waiting for a man to set the stage for the change before sharing it with him? How can values be changed? What role would educated women play, who share [a responsibility] in supporting these same values, in the way they bring up their children? The writer calls upon women to abandon their indifference and to take part in politics. What women is she referring to? Is she referring to rural women? Is she referring to simple workers? How can these women become involved in politics when they are immersed in misconceptions fostered by their upbringing and defined by their essential needs and the authority of the media? What does she mean by political participation when the roads to political [power] are closed to society as a whole? Therein men and women are equal, those who are endowed with reason and those who are not.

And here we return once again to educated women as women who are more perceptive and more likely to be asked [the following]:

--To programme change through models of action and conduct;

--To turn statements into actions;

--To set an example and pay the tax on their education to other women, on the one hand, and to society, on the other. Very briefly, women are to begin with existing material reality. They are to get things started and to go beyond what exists to prove that their demands are not merely personal demands but rather demands with social objectives.

But can women do this without thought and organization and without social action that requires regional and national planning by a women's movement founded on practice in the course of championing women's perceptions and society's perceptions of women?

#### An Open-Ended Conclusion

In my judgment most of the literature that has been and is being written about the questions of Arab women was not based on objective studies that described the conditions of women and explained them truthfully. Consequently, writers will continue to repeat ideas, and due to this repetition, it will seem that these ideas will be losing much of their impact. Hence, perceptions about women so far have only been very slightly stirred up, compared with what has been proposed for many years. Ideas such as the economic liberation of women, their employment and the necessity of their independence from men are still being proposed, and every time that has occurred, the proposal was not made in a form that was socially applicable, one that went beyond the number of actions that ought to be taken. It seems that these proposals are directed at men so they can carry them out.

Therefore, if everyone were to begin with herself, no matter how lengthy the steps may be, these steps could accumulate into a quantity of steps. The role of the educated elite here is essential and necessary for the development of a women's movement that would adopt an objective investigation and inquiry into

women's conditions which overlap in society. This would be the foundation of this movement which must be organized and established in practical terms by means of [a process of] alternative development that includes all active citizens--men and women--without discriminating between them except in so far as their contributions to society and to its movement whose returns to citizens would come in the form of equal rights and rewards.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. [ "Insights into the Problems of Working Women" ] by Samih 'Abd-al-Fattah, op. cit.
2. "Critical Remarks on Studies Pertaining to Images of Women," an article by Dr Nawal al-Sa'dawi: "How Does the Arab Woman See Herself," in DIRASAT 'ARABIYAH [Arab Studies] Magazine; June 1978, pp 3-19.
3. "The Influence of the Oil Industry on Modernizing Workers' Inclinations and Values," by Dr Jahinah Sultan; DIRASAT AL-KHALIJ WA AL-JAZIRAH AL-'ARABIYYAH [The Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies] Magazine; April 1980; pp 53-70. Women were not included in the research samples [to maintain] the accuracy of methodology.
4. In his anthology, "Memoirs of an Indifferent Woman," consider carefully the title of the anthology. He tells her, "Rebel. I would like for you to rebel. Rebel against the choking of captives, against asylums and against incense...etc." In other works the author soon portrays women as sex objects. He even prides himself on the fact that he bought a woman and that he had cloak tailored from the skin of women. For more details see "Al-Shi'r Wa al-Mawqif: Nizar Qabani Wa Jamahiriyyah al-Shi'r" [Poetry and Stance: Nizar Qabani and the Popularity of Poetry] by Wafiq Khansah in DIRASAT 'ARABIYAH Magazine; April 1980; pp 91-105.
5. See for example, the novel, "Al-Ard" [The Earth] by 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Sharqawi. Although the study focused on the Egyptian press, newspaper circulation among the Arab countries can strengthen [the effort to] benefit from the results of this study and to shed some light on the image of women in Arab newspapers in general.
6. "The Principal Aspects of Women's Conduct as Portrayed by Stories in the Women's Press," by Dr Nahid Ramzi. This is a study published in "The Images of Women in the Media: a Study in Analyzing the Content of the Women's Press," edited by Dr Nahid Ramzi and others; The National Center for Social Studies; Cairo 1977; pp 34-70.
7. "The Political and Sexual Question of Egyptian Women," By Dr Nawal al-Sa'dawi; The New Culture Notebooks; Dar al-Thaqafah al-Jadidah [New Culture Publishing House]; Cairo 1977; pp 48-49.
8. For more details on the notions and characteristics of the social movement see the following source: "Social Movement" by P. Wilkinsen; Pall Mall, London 1971; pp 11-29. See also a similar presentation in Arabic in the book,

"Political Sociology: Concepts and Questions" by Dr al-Sayyid al-Husayni; 1st edition, 1980. Chapter Five, pp 251-309.

9. See an explanatory presentation in "Arab Women in Development" by Dr Thurayya al-Sharif, AL-MUSTAQBAL AL-'ARABI [The Arab Future] Magazine; March 1979; pp 148-160.
10. See, for example, the collection of articles in AL-MUSTAQBAL AL-'ARABI Magazine on "The Concerns of Arab Women," op. cit.
11. "Toward a New Role for Women in Arab Society" by Dr Safiyyah Sa'adah in AL-MUSTAQBAL AL-'ARABI Magazine; June 1980 pp 58-66.

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## BORING LIFE OF LUXURY SAID TO BE SUFFOCATING WOMEN

Manama AL-BAHRAIN in Arabic No 670, 14 Jul 82 p 46

[Editorial: "An Opinion"]

[Text] Boredom! Why is there boredom? Every contemporary woman is complaining about boredom. Boredom is suffocating contemporary women and destroying their lives. But why is it that their grandmothers knew nothing about boredom?

Many psychologists have been troubled by this question, but the causes and consequences of this phenomenon which they were able to deduce turned out to be nothing more than self-evident observations. They did not try to understand what contemporary women want so they can get rid of the feelings of boredom which they have despite the cultural variables that enrich their lives, imbuing them with bright and radiant colors that inspire joy and pleasure in every walk of life.

Contemporary women are fortunate for having all the means of luxury and comfort in their homes and outside their homes. Contemporary women no longer have to struggle and face challenges. Everything [that has to be done] can be done easily. Hence come their feelings of boredom. [Our] grandmothers used to work very hard continuously day and night. They struggled incessantly, and they faced challenges that aroused their determination and tested their abilities. They had no time to be bored. To put it briefly, contemporary women need some sort of challenge in their lives. They need something to challenge their energies; they need something to excite them, to occupy [their time] and to take up all the leisure that contemporary life has brought them with its inventions, gadgets and innovations for recreation and comfort. Boredom would then disappear from their lives forever. Contemporary women have to choose between breaking their polished fingernails while washing dishes or chewing their polished fingernails out of boredom during their hours of leisure which are prolonged by their empty and vacuous lives.

If we only knew that the driving force behind many deviant crimes today is the luxury that people are wallowing in, and if we only knew that criminologists have revealed that making young people work hard was the radical remedy for corruption, [we would realize that such corruption] illustrates an attempt on the part of corrupt, young men to put their energies to work; these energies are pent-up or idle because of the easy and comfortable life [these men lead].

If we were to know this, we would actually come to believe that hard work, which



was the lot of our grandmothers in life--they were satisfied with it, and they were content to accept it--was the secret of their happiness. It is our indolence, our languor and our reliance as contemporary women on machines and servants that lie behind the boredom which is suffocating us.

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## STUDY SUGGESTS MORE ACTIVE ROLE FOR WOMEN IN UAE

Abu Dhabi EMIRATES NEWS in English 28 Jun 82 p 3

[Text]

ABU DHABI (EN): A more active role by women in day-to-day affairs of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is recommended in a new study compiled here, according to WAM.

The study is the first of its kind in the UAE. It provides guidelines for utilising the female work force in projects of national development.

Because of a shortage of local manpower the UAE relies greatly on expatriates from Arab and non-Arab countries for its development projects.

But the trend is slowly changing as more and more local students graduate from the country's university.

Local participation would increase considerably if women were persuaded to play their due role in national affairs, the study pointed out.

It stressed the need to encourage women to abandon their economic restraint and play an active role in the

task of national development while preserving their cultural and religious traditions.

At present, women account for only

3.3 per cent of the total workforce in the country. The rate is expected to increase to 7.8 per cent by 1985.

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## OLDER WOMAN FINDS NEW CAREER BEHIND WHEEL

Abu Dhabi EMIRATES NEWS in English 25 Aug 82 p 2

[Text]

RAS AL KHAIMAH (EN): She is more than 70 years old. Yet she works as a school busdriver in the morning and as an instructor in a driving school in the afternoon.

National Moza Mohamed, confidently sits behind the wheels of the bus belonging to the Hind Girls' School, Ras Al Khaimah.

Moza says she started her auto career seven years ago when her son bought a Range Rover. "I managed to drive the car away from our house and began to practise. When darkness fell, I tried to go home but, a tyre went flat. Somehow I fixed the spare tyre and drove back to the village."

Since then, her fondness for the vehicle took a serious shape when she bought a mini-bus to drive grandsons and granddaughters to schools. She learned the simple mechanics of the wheel drive and dealt with minor breakdowns.

She is a popular figure at Al Hind school where she is loved and respected. Moza loves and respects her work as a driver. In fact, she refused to stay idle after school hours. So she joined a driving school to teach other women how to man cars.

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## PROPOSED UAE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION DISCUSSED

Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 16 May 82 p 5

[Article by Khitam Baytar: "Will al-Muntazah Club Go beyond Traditional Women's Gatherings? Working Women and Female Students To Work Together To Execute the Idea"]

[Text] Women play an important role in building society and improving conditions in the homeland. They have as many duties to their community as they have rights. Therefore, we see that women are aware of their role when they stay away from statements that have nothing to do with our Islamic principles.

Women's awareness of themselves as a segment [of society] must grow and develop to help them contribute to [their society] under any circumstances. Women can do what they are asked to do even when they work in an educational or any other institution and whether they are students in secondary school or in the university. When women are gathered together within a real base, they can become productive and develop personalities that are compatible with the magnitude of the responsibility that is required of them and that they have undertaken for the men and women of their community.

The idea of establishing a club for the female citizens of the seven emirates was proposed as an expression of the objectives sought by female citizens. These objectives seek to consolidate the importance of women's role and their work so that better things can be achieved for the future generations of this homeland. In view of this appeal one can only bless this step and adhere to it until the hoped for and required objective is achieved. Furthermore, we, the women of this country, have to stand by this idea until it should see the light of day. We also have to keep away anyone who wants to undermine this idea in any way because this club must protect its objectives which are stipulated in its charter. The club must not be turned into a place for amusement, [idle] talk and fashion shows. It must rather be a cultural beacon and a place where social differences of wealth and appearances are fused. This is especially the case since the objectives of the club are based on the following principles:

1. Improving the cultural, social, athletic and artistic standards of club members.
2. Strengthening relations of sisterhood and firmly establishing Islamic principles.

3. Contributing to the creation and development of members' various talents.
4. Devoting attention to the cultural and social questions of society.
5. Club members are to be fused into a cohesive social unit, and they are to spend their hours of leisure in useful activities.
6. Members are to be inured to the importance of team work and assuming responsibility.

All the objectives are aimed at the process of increasing the awareness of women whether they are university students, school students, workers or homemakers. This is because they will all be one and the same when this club begins its operations in the social and cultural field.

Citizen Fatimah Ahmad spoke about the club and said, "It is a good idea, and I think it has been adequately considered. But I wish the charter members would have waited a little before calling for a meeting of the general membership until the idea should become widespread among citizens in the proper way. This is because university students as well as working women should take part in the dialogue about the club's charter. The idea would thus take shape and grow, and the club would become an example of democracy and dialogue. But since the club has already elected its president and its charter committee, we must take part in it and join it. It may be a new step that will bring about the participation in building society to which women in the Emirates aspire."

'Aliyah Misbah said, "If this idea yields fruit, and if those who are carrying it out want it to be complete and purposeful, I would consider this club the healthy and proper place that will help women in the state participate truly and openly in cultural and social matters because the incorporation of all women from all parts of the state [into this club] would be the actual step that the club must focus on, especially since there are many women who are eager to become involved in serious team work and volunteer work."

Samar Jum'ah dealt with more than this and offered a number of tips. She said, "The general membership meeting that was held in Africa Hall was not complete. We in the Emirate of Ra's al-Khaymah knew nothing of the club until its charter board was elected. There are special words to the wise about this matter: the club is not to assume the characteristics of a single emirate, but it should rather assume the characteristics of the women of the state in general. We consider this matter an error because we are eager to work with women from any emirate whatsoever. I consider this to be the proper course for women's social work. Although the club may be lacking in some aspects, we will achieve our goals through this action, especially if club members have a measure of responsibility and awareness. Otherwise, the club will turn into [a place for] tea and coffee parties, embroidery sessions and handcraft displays only."

Rawdah Sa'id: "I will talk about another aspect: inviting every young, unmarried woman to join the club and become a permanent active member. This is because sound structures begin with such clubs, especially if young women are aware and capable of knowing their role as good citizens who believe in making contributions and intellectual change. I believe that establishing a special club for young, unmarried women at this stage in particular is best because the club will

enable women to have contact with their countrywomen and they will become inured to the importance of confrontation in society. Furthermore, women will become aware of the literary, cultural and social trends around them by dealing with others and cooperating with them.

"Finally, I hope that this club will become a good model for an experiment that we should have had several years ago."

#### Words to the Wise That Must Be Spoken

A second group of citizens who are interested in such matters and who had first-hand experience with these women's gatherings had an opinion on the matter. They took the club's bylaws and reviewed some matters that the club's charter members should have overcome because they will put the club back where women's societies were. The role of these societies was confined to a few simple services, but at the present time they are providing courses in nursing, sewing and other subjects.

Muzah 'Abdallah said, "One clause in Article Three of Section Three of the [club's] charter states that club membership is presently restricted to female citizens of the Emirates and the Gulf states. This preliminary step to limit membership is quite similar to any charter of any other society because this idea did not actually reach any female citizen outside the Emirates. Furthermore, why shouldn't female citizens of all Arab countries [join] the club? Don't they have a right to work with us, when they were the ones who taught us in the schools and taught us what we are doing today? They can at least hold associate memberships. I believe that this is a legitimate demand because without them, the activity of the club would be limited, especially since the number of women in the Emirates is relatively small. This will make us rely on the method societies use in offering social services, whereas our services must be volunteered and offered free of charge. This cannot come about unless Arab women are in the club because Arab women have been involved in such work before us. I do not mean that membership should be awarded at random. Membership must rather be limited by certain conditions to guarantee that our choices are good."

Shaykhah Mahmud said, "The charter stipulates that a young, unmarried woman under 18 be an associate member of the club and that she does not have the right to vote or to be a full member. I believe it would be better if that age [limit] were 16, because a student in secondary school has the right to be an active member of the club, especially since [at that age] she may join women's societies as an associate member. This would give the club vitality and energy. Let [these] women have the right to vote, and when they exceed the required age, they will have attained the required standard, and they can then nominate themselves to serve as members of the board of directors. Everything may be changed as long as the objective that is being sought by the charter board is that of serving this society, building the confidence of young women and helping them achieve social and cultural awareness. In proposing this idea, I do so for one reason: young, unmarried women at this age must feel that their time is important. Therefore, they must not waste their time on marginal issues. When we give them certain responsibilities, we are offering them a service and at the same time benefiting from their energies in athletic, intellectual or literary activities which otherwise would have been wasted."

Raya Muflih, a student, spoke with intense enthusiasm and said, "This club is the suitable place for us students. We will join the club as soon as membership is opened. We will try to carry out the tasks that we are asked to do. We will prove our ability to assume responsibility, and we will not let anyone turn the club into a place for luxury and amusement. This club will rather become the place for persistent effort with regard to offering social service and playing a cultural and an athletic role stemming from the importance of the students' need for these matters. We do need free cultural debates, and we do need to know about the women's movements in the Arab countries and in the world. These matters will become our primary concern if we are given the opportunity to work in this club. We would thereby thwart those who want this club to be a place for amusement only."

#### Another Opinion

There is a number of citizens who see the club as a place for amusement only. They became enthusiastic about the idea and supported it vigorously, especially since the club will have a play area for children. They disregarded the fact that the club would be a place for cultural, literary and artistic awareness. Some citizens spoke about this matter.

'Afra' Muhsin said, "We truly need such a club because we get bored at home, and there is nowhere a woman can go by herself or with her children. The establishment of this club will alleviate this problem. Furthermore, women in the country will meet their sisters in the other emirates and will get to know them. I believe that this club will be quite successful, especially if membership dues are not high."

Zaynab 'Ali added, "In addition to what my countrywoman said I believe that many efforts have been made for this club. Therefore, we have to implement the clauses of its charter fully, and we must not violate them. We would thereby gain the confidence of everybody and have a permanent place where we can spend our spare time, especially if this club will have a reading room and publish a newsletter. Such matters would make the club the healthy place that should be frequented by young, unmarried women who spend most of their time in front of the television screen. In addition, women's meetings with their friends at the club would be better than home visits. Therefore, we have to bring this club into existence quickly before the summer and the beginning of the school holiday."

Aminah Thani Mubarak said, "The club must be completely different from women's societies. That is, university students must make up a considerable portion of club membership. This is an invitation to our sisters, the students and to educated women. The activities discussed by the club's charter are in keeping only with the nature of students, that is, devoting full-time effort to club activities. Such devotion of full-time effort would give the club a radiant future. Young women in the country have many talents, such as sketching, sculpting, painting and writing, but none of these talents has a place in existing societies. Therefore, this club must be the principal place where we, the women of Ra's al-Khaymah and the women of Dubai would meet and where students in Abu Dhabi and students in Bahrain would meet with young women in Kuwait. It is in this way that we can say that we have left behind the common forms of women's gatherings. Is Kuwait better than we are? Kuwaiti women's gatherings have established their competence and capability for work because students actively participated in them."

## A Step To Reach Out

Salwa al-Na'imi said, "The idea of a club is a good idea; in fact, it is an excellent idea. I wish we could all try to make it live and breathe and not stifle it with ordinances and laws that would keep activity from becoming evident. I wish we could make the club a place for culture, learning and literature in every sense of those words and not a place for amusement and recreation. We are living in a time when our weapons are our minds.

"Let this club be a place for all young, educated women where they can exchange culture, and information, refine their talents, improve their spirits, do away with the established principles about the feeble role of women and implant new principles that are based on cooperation and creative team work. It is possible for the club to have amusement as one of its objectives, but this must not be its distinguishing characteristic.

"What is more important is the educational movement that the club could direct. This can come about by drawing up a program whose purpose would be to develop intellectual and cultural exchange with Arab women's movements known for their firm and positive steps in this regard. Students must also be encouraged to work and join the club so that they would have the opportunity [to be active], an opportunity which was not afforded to them by women's societies."

Ibtisam Shahil said, "The deliberations that are taking place around this club are only a healthy sign that we must take into account because they reflect the need which women in the Emirates have for such clubs, especially since women's activities in the state are quite restricted. Women head home from work, and they visit friends. I believe that this places the female student in a vicious circle and sets her onto a single course where she withdraws into the circle of information she acquired from a very narrow environment. The club would be the first step enabling women to reach out to meet their countrywomen and deal with them in a cultural, recreational team effort setting. Therefore I am hoping that the idea will become more widespread, that it will become common in the various emirates and that women in remote areas, who are still far away from simple learning and knowledge, will be taken into consideration."

And now we must draw a conclusion from these opinions that have been expressed. Everyone wants the idea to materialize, and everyone is prepared to cooperate. But will this club be a model for the cooperation of the women of the seven emirates, or will its role be confined to programs similar to those of current women's activities? If this is the case, we call upon everyone to develop the idea and to offer her volunteer work, especially since we no longer need words and theories, but we rather need actual effort to prove the existence of any idea with which we are dealing.

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## UAE WOMEN'S PROGRESS OUTLINED

Kuwait AL-SIYASAH in Arabic 7 May 82 pp 9, 11

[Article by Tahani al-Burtuqali: "Women in the Emirates Move Ahead with Great Speed"]

[Excerpts] Women in the women's police earn the highest salaries in the state.

Personal status laws forbid that women be compelled to live with their husbands and with another wife a husband may marry.

The laws forbid marriages between old men and young women.

200 schools have been designated for 50,000 female students in the Emirates.

We can say at the outset that women in the Emirates have succeeded in reconciling their role as citizens who have rights and liberties with respect for the traditions of their country. Women in the Emirates still adhere to these traditions. In a short period of time and by working quietly women in the Emirates succeeded in narrowing the gap between the past and the present. They also succeeded in closing the generation gap.

The question that recurs and comes to mind is this: To what extent has the state contributed to awakening and supporting women's ideas of participation? The reply explains quite simply that education was the foremost and direct reason for this. We learn that in 1952 there was only one school for males in the Emirates. In 1960 the number of schools rose to 27, and 8 of these were schools for girls. In 1973 after the United Arab Emirates was established, the number of male and female students continued to grow until 1981 when that number was 130,000 male and female students. There are more than 200 schools for female students whose number at present is 50,000. The numbers also reflect the state's interest in education [especially] when we learn that 10.4 percent of the total general budget of the Emirates went to education.

The Emirates University, which was established in al-'Ayn in 1977 exemplifies the notion of education. The first class graduated from this university this year. In addition students are sent abroad to study in colleges that cannot be found in the Emirates University.

Also the first-rate care that was given to the elimination of illiteracy benefited women's lives adding to them much awareness and maturity.

In this regard figures in 1980 records state that over 14,000 male and female citizens were studying at illiteracy centers.

What else has the state offered to help women?

The state had to think of the role of social development. The Ministry of Social Affairs set up development centers in villages and cities for the purpose of providing integrated services for women, since women make up the less developed segment of society. This requires that women be educated in the areas of raising children. The purpose of these centers also is to incorporate women into the process of social development, to provide them with social guidance and to raise the standard of education. Therefore, the ministry established schools for educating women and spreading religious and social awareness in their midst. In 1979-1980 [a total of] 260 lectures was offered; these lectures were attended by 15,591 women. The ministry showed 186 guidance movies. In addition, [social] workers visited women for the purpose of furthering family ties. Women also visited factories, schools, hospitals and airports.

In addition, care for female senior citizens was provided by setting up six centers for senior citizens.

The real manifestation of interest in women came in an announcement establishing 24 religious, cultural, professional and artistic societies. Seven of these are women's societies whose members include 2,479 women.

These societies played a major role for women.

They were the firm and solid foundation upon which women in the Emirates stood. In addition, there was a strong supporting [factor] that yielded fruit in every sector [of society] and benefited women considerably.

This supporting [factor] has been and still is the actual backing of al-Shaykhah Fatimah, the wife of Shaykh Zayid ibn Sultan Al Nuhayyan. She sponsors all women's projects in her country and heads the Women's Alliance and the Women's Society.

#### The Constitution Guarantees Women Education and Employment

We will cite examples of the fact that women have entered most fields of life in the name of the constitution and under its banner. The constitution gave women the right to get an education and to work. The constitution took women's conditions into account: [their role] as mothers who nurse their children and who take maternity leave and child rearing leave. Newspapers in the Emirates devoted their pages to women and set aside columns for them so they can express their opinions. Radio and television also devoted time to women. Besides, cultural traveling programs and seasons prepared by women in the Emirates express their opinions, enabling women to get in touch with their problems and impart their image to a broad segment of the population. Although the veil still exists, women's minds have not been veiled from knowledge and work.

Women in the Emirates have held numerous positions. Although their numbers are still small, the first woman who got the position of assistant deputy minister in the Ministry of Education is 'A'ishah al-Sayyar. Women are employed in [the ministries of] social affairs, foreign affairs, information and oil. There are female instructors in the university; and there are women in health [services] and in the police. Large numbers of policewomen graduated [from the police academy], and they protect every area where women can be found.

In 1974 a school for nurses' aides was opened in Abu Dhabi.

There is also a Girls' Scouts Society which has 2,000 girl scouts as members. They got together in an educational movement to develop citizens who are useful educationally, nationally and socially.

The women's police has become acceptable to a large number of young women in the Emirates. They are attracted to the women's police [corps] where women earn the highest state salaries and are also granted housing and military rank.

University students also receive a monthly salary, and they are provided with transportation inside and outside the city of al-'Ayn to the seven emirates. University students are also provided with room and board along with the highest standard of education. This explains the secret of women's academic success; women are trying to give as much as they have taken.

#### Women outside the Emirates

Women played their role not only inside the emirates, but they also began their surge in 1975 when they traveled out of the country to represent it at international conferences. Among these international conferences were [the following]:

--The Mexico Conference at which the UN Declaration of Women's Rights was issued.

--The Islamic Women's Conference which was held in Rabat; the Women's Cultural Conference which was held in Cairo; the seventh session of the meetings of the Arab Women's Committee, which was held in Marrakech; and a symposium on Gulf children that was held in al-Basrah in Iraq.

The Women's Alliance also took part in the exhibition that was held in Jiddah and was sponsored by Princess Fawziyah, the wife of Prince Fawwaz. [Women in the Emirates took part] in a women's conference that was held in Tunis, and they participated in another worldwide conference that was held in Copenhagen. Women have thus been able to act as ambassadors for their countries abroad. Women still consider themselves traveling on the road [to achieve their objectives]. [In this regard] Shaykhah Fatimah, the wife of Shaykh Zayid made the wise statement, "We are not saying that we have attained the perfect state or that we have even approached the objectives we are hoping for. What is certain, however, is that we are on our way."

## NEGATIVE VOTE ON KUWAITI WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE DISCUSSED

Kuwait AL-SIYASAH in Arabic 2 Feb 82 p 18

[Article by 'Abd-al-Qadir Karajah: "These Men Said, 'No' to the Wave of Protest Led by Women against the National Assembly's Decision; the Hand That Rocks the Cradle Rules the World; the Natural Place for Muslim Women Is That of Taking Care of Their Families' Affairs and Bringing up Their Children"]

When Qasim Amin, one of the earliest advocates of women's liberation, called for women's rights, women were enslaved by restrictions and they walked in the shadow of men. They were not entitled to an education, and they were not entitled to choose their own husbands or to chart the course of their lives freely. Qasim Amin was sincere in his call, but his call lacked a focus on a sound Islamic religious aspect of behavior. Thus Arab women, unveiled and wearing the latest fashions, proceeded to ask for their freedom. They achieved freedom in education, culture, politics and diplomacy. Men found themselves in a critical position: they were allowing women more and more freedom every day and adding new gains to the rights they had gained. Men were thus stripped of their rights as fathers, husbands and grandfathers, and they needed to have someone restore these rights to them.

What matters is that at the present time Kuwaiti women are protesting, demanding political rights which they assert are "legitimate."

But where do men stand on this urgent demand which is filling the hearts of men with fear and trepidation?

Are there men standing on women's side asking that they be given this so-called "right?" The Kuwaiti National Assembly has spoken. But let us find out the opinions of some of the men who make up the opposition. They have their argument and their convictions.

### The Opinion of Legislators

Husayn Naji, a Court of Appeals attorney and a former counselor for the Council of Ministers says, "Islam does not prevent women from expressing their opinions on who represents them. Nor does it prevent them from expressing their opinions on any social problem that is presented to them or to society. Women have the right to vote but not the right to represent other women in parliament, unless they satisfy the condition of [earning women's] confidence regarding their

knowledge and their ability to study a problem that is pending. Their mental outlook and their intellectual course must be consistent with the philosophy, laws and course of Islam. If such a woman were available, there would be no objection at all to having her represent other women, nor would there be any objection to adopting her opinion. This does not mean that her opinion would be binding on other people of importance."

#### The Opinion of Religion

"Women may not be judges," said His Eminence Shaykh Hafiz 'Abd al-Ma'bud al-Gharbawi. He added, "To say that orthodox theologians allowed women to be judges is to make a weak argument. Under no conditions whatsoever are women to serve as judges or as legislators because such work requires men to look into those affairs of women which women cannot look into. The principal duty of a woman is her home: a woman has to serve her husband and her children. There would be no objections to women serving as teachers and nurses, or they can become headmistresses or deans of women's schools or colleges. But women may not assume such positions over men."

His Eminence Shaykh Tayis al-Jamili says, "Reasonable people do not dispute the fact that Islam took women out of the bottomless pit they were in in the days that preceded Islam when women were despised and disdained: women did not inherit; they suffered injustice and tyranny; and they were forced to marry against their wishes. This was women's lot with pre-Islamic Arabs; other nations, however, doubted the humanity of women and wondered whether they deserved rewards for their good deeds. Finally, the Ecclesiastical Synod in Rome determined that women were soulless, irredeemable impure animals. Under Roman law a husband had the right to sell his wife and to take over any property she may have. Then the Islamic message dawned upon the Earth, repudiating everything that was prevalent about women. In Islam women have the right to live their lives and to be protected just as men are. Women are worthy of being honored; they have the right to be won and the right to receive a dowry. Women have the right to have custody of their small children, and they have the right to learn useful knowledge, provided they abide by what are legitimate manners and proper methods for them. They must also learn what is suitable to their mission in life and what would strengthen their instinctive calling to rear children and look after a household.

"The question of women's involvement in public affairs and political questions is confined to what would not infringe upon their original mission and calling. If we were fair, [we would realize that] this does not diminish or undermine women's role. It is rather the fairness and justice that the Creator Almighty chose for women to protect family stability and the household environment from the suffering which befalls those who are charged with such burdens.

"The claim that this is contrary to Islam is quite far [from the truth], or it is a true statement whose objective is false. If involvement in public affairs by giving advice to those who are in charge and contributing to the improvement of proper awareness in society [is what women want], this is provided for them and they can do that by writing and holding discussions for other women to promote Islamic directives and make [other] women aware of their duties toward their children, their husbands and their homes. This is a cumbersome mission, and it is the one in which those who are enthusiastic about women's suffrage have failed. I

do not need to repeat the argument expressed by the National Assembly in rejecting this matter which is sound in its totality, true in its reality and felt by those who put it into practice."

#### The Opinion of Poets

The Kuwaiti lyric poet, 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Khamis says, "The time for Kuwaiti women to serve as representatives in parliament has not come yet. In Kuwait educated, knowledgeable women are still a small minority. In the future when their numbers grow, they will have the responsibility of making their votes a reasonable cultural requirement. At that time one will find that everyone will welcome this step. But now we are a society that is in the process of building itself. We need women's efforts more to rear children and men of the future. Kuwaiti women should be proud of the fact that they are the makers of men. If they carry out this major responsibility, God will shower them with blessings. They would get the greatest credit for the development of the country and the progress of individuals."

Al-Khamis wondered, "Who taught men when they were children? Who looked after them, and who made them reach the National Assembly and other political positions in the country? It is women, and this is their true place."

#### The Opinions of Male Educators

'Ali Bajad, deputy director of a secondary school says, "I support women serving as representatives in the National Assembly, but I am saying that the time for that has not come yet. Women have to bide their time and wait until Kuwaiti women acquire a track record in education, culture, political awareness and know-how and persuasive ability. At the present time the best service Kuwaiti women can render their homeland is in the field of education. Society likes nothing better than an educated woman teaching other women, making them literate and developing their capabilities for knowledge about matters of life. This is because women's attention to the education of their children is a major responsibility. The poet spoke the truth when he said:

" 'If one prepares women for the school of motherhood,  
'One will have provided a nation of noble descent.'"

"He who said, 'The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world' spoke the truth."

We asked him, "Let's assume that a man and a woman, both of whom had a measure of knowledge and education, were [vying with each other] to represent your electoral district, whom would you vote for?"

After a hearty laugh he said, "I will deal with this when it happens."

But then he added, "It is true that Kuwaiti women are now educated. [It is true] that they have earned graduate degrees and are knowledgeable, but these women are a small minority in society."

We asked him to mention the names of some of these women so we could determine the extent of his full awareness of the knowledgeable cultural women's movement in Kuwait.

He said, "We have Dr Badriyah al-'Awadi, Dr Rasha Hamud al-Sabah, Mrs Faddah al-Khalid, Mrs Su'ad al-Rifa'i, Dr Kafiya Ramadan and others. These women are the ones who through their cultural positions, their social activities and their perceptive actions brought about the required cultural effect for the progress of the country. We know that they are knowledgeable and educated, and we hope that their numbers will increase so that Kuwaiti women can ask for this right and meet with no objections."

Amidst these daring opinions opposed to the action women took to demand their right to serve in parliament, we found a university graduate who teaches and whose name is Ghalib Hadi al-'Anzi. He said, "We must give women the right to vote, to be candidates and to serve in parliament. We acknowledge that women make up half of society. Women have achieved several positions of leadership and have proven their competence. Why should we deny them the right to express their opinions?"

Mr 'Abd-al-Latif Sa'id, a resident of al-Jahra' city who works in education as the principal of a secondary school says, "No one is denying the importance of women in the lives of nations. There is no one in our midst who would usurp any of women's legitimate rights which are decreed by God Almighty. But I think that it is too soon [to have women's suffrage]. Let us educate women; let us help them and encourage them to hold positions of leadership.

"Let us find out where women may stumble, and let us find remedies for such contingencies. Women are weak and need someone to stand beside them. Let us open schools to eliminate illiteracy among homemakers who did not get enough education. This is a major responsibility.

"When we have large numbers of knowledgeable, educated teachers who are devout and adhere to God's religion and the traditions of His prophet, no man will object to any demand women make. This does not mean that we are refusing to vote for women in the elections. Quite the contrary, if we hear of a good woman who is educated and knowledgeable about the matters of her religion, her homeland and life [in general] and who has a large measure of political awareness and understanding, we would choose her as our representative in the National Assembly, provided public opinion finds the entry of women into parliamentary life suitable at that time."

He adds, "We have numbers of women leaders who would confer honor upon anyone who belongs to this land. They have high moral standards; their conduct is balanced; their educational background is broad, and they have an ability to manage matters in the various areas of life. Unfortunately, however, the number of these women is very small. There may be other numbers of women who have not been given a chance to act and to bring about cultural change and contribute to cultural, diplomatic, economical and social activities. What is required here is that we give these people their real role so that women can affirm that they are capable of giving an opinion that stems not from emotion but rather from objective reasoning which is purely secular. This matter needs time, but that time is not too far away. Just encourage women. However, at this time in particular giving women the right to represent us in parliament would be a threat to women's cultural gains."

Colleague Muhammad Sulayman al-Shimri, editor of the religious section thinks, "The ignorant community of women was angered when the National Assembly decided--and we are grateful for that decision--that women have no political rights. The assembly absolutely refused women's participation in the membership of the National Assembly. The members of the National Assembly were right; they voted and endorsed what was right. In this decision they obeyed God Almighty Who said, 'Rule with justice among men and do not yield to lust, lest it should turn you away from Allah's path' (Sad: 26). God also said, 'Restrain yourself, together with those who pray to their Lord morning and evening, seeking His pleasure' (al-Kahf: 28). God also said, 'Do not yield to the desires of those who have already erred; who have led many astray and have themselves strayed from the even path' (al-Ma'idah: 77).

"In thanking our brothers, the members of the National Assembly who voted against the membership of women in the National Assembly, [we state] that they did so according to the instructions of Islam. Their vote raises the status of women and does not denigrate their rights. But most people do not know this. God Almighty said, 'Say: "My Lord reveals the truth. He has knowledge of all that is hidden.'" (Sheba: 48)

"Islam promoted the importance of women and gave them a lofty position at a time when their rights were denied with impunity and they themselves were a commodity to be bought and sold. Islam gave women control over their lives; Islam gave women the freedom to speak and to have feelings and emotions. Islam put limits on this freedom that are consistent with divine orders. These are, 'Stay in your homes and do not display your finery...' [al-Ahzab: 33]. Islam honored women by forbidding the killing of female infants and giving them the right to live: '...when the infant girl, buried alive, is asked for what crime she was slain' (al-Takwir: 9).

"Some writers have interpreted this verse to mean that 'if women are denied membership in the National Assembly, such a denial would be tantamount to female infanticide, [and they ask] for what crime are women being slain?' About those whose hearts moved them to advocate women's rights, God Almighty said that, 'Bigotry--the bigotry of ignorance--was holding its reign in the hearts of unbelievers' (al-Fath: 6). Those people interpreted the verses of God's Holy Book as they wished. They are so misguided. God Almighty said, 'And who is in greater error than the man who is led by his whim without guidance from Allah?' (al-Qasas: 50).

"Others have interpreted God's statement that 'A male shall inherit twice as much as a female' [al-Nisa': 11] by saying that for each male member in the National Assembly there are to be two female members. Those people are confusing inheritance with membership [in a parliamentary body]. God Almighty said, 'Most of them follow nothing but mere conjecture' (Yunis: 36). These people were not satisfied with this. They also cited a weak Prophetic Tradition as an argument. This is the tradition of al-Hamayra'. They also confused knowledge with politics, which means the legislative authority.

"Those who are flattering people are embarked upon dark labyrinths and dungeons, and one finds them unwilling to listen to the truth, unwilling to speak the truth and unable to see the right path. They do not change their minds.



"Islam, gentlemen, honored women by [allowing them] to inherit, something they were denied [in the past]. God Almighty said, 'A male shall inherit twice as much as a female' (al-Nisa': 11). Are women here equal to men? Why do women get half what men get? Did not God Almighty say, 'the male is not like the female' (Al Imran: 36)? As long as women inherit half of what men do, why can't they have half the leadership men have? This is due to reasons God only knows when He said, 'the male is not like the female' and also when He said, 'Women shall with justice have rights similar to those exercised against them, although men have a status above women' (al-Baqarah: 228).

"God Almighty placed limits on the rights, freedom and equality of women. These limits are consistent and congruent with the principal purpose for which humans and the jinn were created. God Almighty said, 'I created mankind and the jinn in order that they might worship Me' (al-Dhariyat: 56).

"The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation, made a statement to the mistress of all the women of the world, his daughter Fatimah who did not ask for membership in a national assembly or a diplomatic post, but only asked for a servant. Fatimah's father, the foremost teacher of all humanity told her, 'Fear God, Fatimah, and perform your duties to your God. Perform the work of your family, and when you go to bed, say the name of God 33 times, thank God 33 times and praise God 43 times. This is better for you than a servant.' She said, 'I accept this from God and from His prophet.' She neither yelled nor wailed.

"The rights of Muslim women are [confined] primarily and solely to their homes and their children. The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation, told the mother of all believers, Umm Salmah, 'If a woman performs her duty to her God, obeys her husband and turns the spindle, it is as though she were praising God.' The prophet also said, 'Women's effort is to pray well.'

"A man who consents to his wife being a member of parliament or a judge or allows her to hold any legislative position does not deserve to be a man. This is supported by a statement made by the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation: 'People who turn their affairs over to a woman have never succeeded.' "

#### The Opinion of a Veiled Woman

Mrs M N A, a woman who wears a veil and who refused to have her name and picture published for personal reasons said, "I strongly refuse to [stand by and] see a Muslim woman who wears European clothes, who does not wear a veil, does not perform the five prayers and does not persevere in understanding the matters of her religion become my representative or the representative of members of my sex. I prefer that my representative, who would convey our problems, our concerns and our causes, be a God-fearing Muslim man who can make decisions and act on the projects of our beloved country, Kuwait."

She adds, "Muslim women can serve their country and their religion in various matters. They can teach young girls the True Religion. They can teach them to love virtue, and they can instill in them noble principles. They can look after the affairs of their homes and manage their families' affairs as well. I cannot imagine women as members of the National Assembly. We were delighted with the decision of the National Assembly, and we thank the Assembly for that decision."

And then, these are some of the opinions whose proponents insist upon. There are other opinions we cannot publish because of limited space.

We are not with or against these opinions, but we wanted to explain--exercising the freedom of opinion which women are presently demanding--the dimensions of this demand and its effect on the hearts of men who fear that their rights may be lost amidst women's successive demands for equality. We ask God for success and guidance for both men and women alike.

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## ROLE OF KUWAITI WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

### Women Barred Despite Excellence

Kuwait AL-SIYASAH in Arabic 29 Jan 82 pp 9, 11

[Part One of Article by Dr Nasif 'Abd-al-Khaliq]

[Text] At this time when political rights for women have been rejected, or more precisely, the principle that women choose their representatives in the National Assembly--the body that represents individuals in society--the natural question that comes to mind is, "Why?" Why is it that women are not being induced to participate in the most important areas of individuals' lives? Regardless of the justifications that have been proffered by way of "analyzing" the rejection of political rights for women, considered unconstitutional in Kuwait, a profound question still remains. It may be that society does not have confidence in women's abilities. It may be that women have not established their competence to pursue their political rights and responsibilities. Are women actually incompetent, or is this [simply] obstinacy on the part of men to deprive women of opportunities for participating, growing, developing and becoming competent?

All these questions are being raised at the present time. To provide objective answers to these questions, we are presenting in the women's section of the newspaper the study that was carried out by Dr Nasif 'Abd-al-Khaliq, assistant professor in the Department of Business Administration in the University of Kuwait. The study is entitled, "The Role of Kuwaiti Women in Development Administration." We will offer this study in installments because of its length and because that is necessary so that the objective reality can be highlighted at the present time.

#### The Concept of Development

We would be greatly mistaken if we were to overburden the concept of development in this preface. This may not be acceptable to scholars of economics and to economists when they undertake discussions of "economic growth" and "economic development" and when they distinguish between various kinds of growth--spontaneous, transitory and planned--and other different kinds of development.

However, what is more important than this is to explain that the concept of development is relative and exists within the scope of normative economics. Development is affected by the personal and subjective judgments and values of

anyone who undertakes to explain it. Hence the concept of economic development varies with the differences in people's aspirations and with what they believe to be the objectives of such development.

So that<sup>1</sup> we can come to an opinion, economists draw a distinction between two matters:

Growth is a real increase in the GNP and in per capita shares in this GNP during a certain period of time.

Development: In addition to signifying what growth signifies, development means a reduction in the number of unemployed people and in the number of those who live in abject poverty. It means continued improvement in the distribution of incomes among the groups and areas of a single country, and<sup>2</sup> it means that the basic needs of people--food, clothing and shelter--are being met.

To this economic aspect of development we add other aspects that turn development into a comprehensive national process in which economic aspects are integrated with social, cultural and political aspects. This concept of development comprises considerations and<sup>3</sup> requirements that are more urgent than those comprised in the concept of growth.

Development is a planned and guided process to bring about change or advancement in the makeup of a state. This change is not expected to take place without a plan that would be drawn up and sponsored by the public authority in a country. In drawing up this plan, the public authority seeks the aid of the primary principles and the established arts in the processes of development.

Briefly, the development we have in mind when we speak of development anywhere in this study is a multi-dimensional and a multi-leveled comprehensive national development that requires precise coordination among the various sectors and a careful accounting of what goes in and what goes out of each sector. This is because economic development alone does not bring about balanced development. Any development that proceeds on its own in any sector is threatened with futility if it ignores what is taking place in other sectors. Development is an integrated, comprehensive process. Success or failure in one aspect of development is reflected and echoed in many other aspects.

#### Development Administration

The term, "development administration," was coined and became widely used during the past few years as administrative problems in developing countries grew sharper and emerged in a more profound and a more urgent fashion. At first this term was used by members of the Comparative Administration Society, but it was used to bring out clear contradictions in its meaning.

In some cases we find that this term was used to mean nothing more than "administration in developing countries." Usage in this sense sets off the features of development and change.

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1. Translator's note: Footnote notations are observed in the body of this article. However, the footnotes themselves are missing from the article in the Arabic language.

In other cases the term was used to mean "the process of guidance and organization that is used to achieve the objectives of development." This definition sets off activity that is guided for the purpose of placing administration in an important and a principal position for the achievement of development goals.

In another definition, "development administration" was defined as "the implementation of laid out economic plans and to a lesser degree the implementation of social services plans in the state." We would like to refer here to the confusion that sometimes takes place between the concept behind many other terms and the concept behind "development administration." Among these other terms are "administrative development," "administrative reform," "administrative growth" and other terms which cannot be defined and distinguished in the context of this study.

However, what is of interest to us here at least is the fact that the meaning and the scope of "development administration" are restricted to depicting the process of administration in developing countries which devise for themselves plans and programs for comprehensive national development. Hence this term, the former term, is more precise and more specific in describing and analyzing the work that is done by the administrative system in these countries. In other words, development administration is "the selection and achievement of political, economic and social goals that were determined in one way or another by a government in a society."

This means that the term, development administration, may not be used to refer equally to the activities of administrative organizations in all developing countries. The term may be used in that sense only in [the following] countries:

1. In countries where development takes place according to a comprehensive plan.
2. In countries where there is a plan or where there are plans to develop operations of the administrative system so as to make them consistent and congruent with the development plan that had been laid out.

#### The Reliance of Development Administration in Kuwait on the Labor Force

Capital is considered one of the rare essentials which the development process in many developing countries lacks. But this is not the case in Kuwait or in some of the other countries of the Gulf. After they meet their needs, these countries have a surplus of funds, especially in the aftermath of the major increase in oil prices in 1973. In 1973 Kuwait's returns from crude oil exports rose from 992.9 million dinars to 2,588.2 billion dinars in 1974.

On the other side of this abundance in capital and reserves there was a concrete shortage in other essentials for development. The labor force that was necessary, with its different standards and skills, to manage this development and to assume responsibility for it [was not available]. The problem was not confined to the scarcity and the limited supply of the labor force. This [situation] was accompanied by other problems and characteristics which are due to the fact that the sources of labor were varied and not homogeneous. There were language and social differences in the labor force, and there were variations in skills standards as well.

Accordingly, the role of Kuwaiti women emerges in the context of this problem as one of the important and principal solutions. Women would be involved in the process of development, and the structural and categorical imbalances in one of the important approaches to development administration would be corrected.

Second, the General Framework of Kuwaiti Women's Contributions to Development Administration

In light of the set of preliminary concepts we presented, we can approach the role of Kuwaiti women on two levels from a purely methodological perspective.

First, the level of proposing and selecting public policies for development.

Second, the level of implementing these policies.

We review below the contributions of Kuwaiti women to each one of these two levels.

A. Contributions of Kuwaiti Women in Proposing and Selecting Public Policies for Development:

Public policies for development consist of a set of principles and directives and the general framework within which the various levels of all development activities take place in congruity and harmony.

In democracies these policies express the opinions of citizens and respond to their aspirations. The courses, channels and forms of expressing these opinions and aspirations may differ, but ultimately, however, they ought to express the hopes and aspirations of citizens fully and truthfully. This does not mean, however, that a mere expression of one's hopes and aspirations would be sufficient in and of itself to make one regime or another qualify for the description of democracy. Democracy is related to and inseparable from the practical steps a state takes to execute what citizens aspire to. It is related to and inseparable from the sound administrative system a state provides to assume the responsibilities of development and to furnish its requirements. Shakespeare explains what is meant by this in his famous line, "Let fools debate the forms of governments: the best managed governments are without exception the best governments." [Translator was unable to locate a line of prose or verse to that effect in the concordance to Shakespeare's works.]

Actually, the role assumed by the state, represented by its various institutions and agencies, is not confined to that of implementing public policies for development. The state's agencies and institutions also carry out a principal task in proposing and designing these policies. They are qualified to do this by virtue of the fact that they have first-hand experience of implementation problems and they know from a close distance what citizens need.

We conclude from this that the process of proposing and selecting public policies for development is a duty shared by citizens on the one hand and state institutions and agencies on the other. The role of these institutions and agencies is no longer confined to that of achieving and implementing public policies.

We can now consider the role of Kuwaiti women in proposing and devising public policies for development from two angles:

First, [we can consider the role of Kuwaiti women] as citizens of this society who have the same rights of citizenship that men do.

Second, [we can consider their role] as members of the state's institutions and agencies holding positions of leadership that qualify them to propose development policies and make selections among these policies.

Regardless of the angle from which we view the role of women, this view is based on two matters.

#### 1. Steps toward Maturity and Preparation Taken by Kuwaiti Women

Kuwaiti women are mistaken if they expect men to extend to them an invitation to join them in devising public policies for development or if they expect men to favor them one day by granting them some of their rights in that regard. That day will not come [here] just as it has not in any other society. Accordingly, debates, conferences and studies that call for the establishment of women's rights in employment become ineffective unless women themselves provide role models and show that they have the abilities to go to the various places of work and assume their responsibilities.

This role in particular, that of taking part in devising development policies and determining how development processes will be administered, will not be attained by women unless women themselves seize that role and persuade others that they are fit to assume the responsibilities of that role. Until that takes place, women, before anyone else, will have to take a number of measures and steps to refine their skills and polish their efficiency.

In the context of such preparations Kuwaiti women have taken broad and concrete strides that went beyond those taken by men. Future trends also foretell that women will continue taking these steps and that these steps will be larger in coming years.

To provide evidence for this we cite two important indicators. We think these two indicators reveal the extent to which Kuwaiti women are qualified to assume their role in devising development policies. These two indicators are:

##### Female Graduates of the University of Kuwait

Statistics indicate that ever since the first class graduated from its colleges in 1969-1970 and for 10 subsequent years the total number of graduates of the University of Kuwait amounted to 4,658. At the same time the number of male graduates amounted to 1,667. In other words, female graduates of the University of Kuwait make up 61 percent of all graduates of the university. Male graduates, however, make up 39 percent of the total number.

As far as Kuwaitis are concerned, this ratio between men and women is becoming clearer and is continuing in the same direction. The number of female graduates from 1970-1971 to the first semester of 1979-1980 was 2,328 compared with 1,296

male graduates for the same period. That ratio is 64 percent for females and 36 percent for males.

#### Female Graduates of Technical Institutes

Statistics also indicate that from 1975-1976 and for 5 consecutive years till 1979-1980, the number of female graduates from technical institutes, which are affiliated with the Ministry of Education--the Teachers' Institute, the Business Institute for Girls and the Health Institute amounted to 2,668, whereas the number of male graduates--from the Male Teachers' Institute, the Business Institute and the Institute of Technology--was 1,542. In other words, female graduates of the Teachers' Institutes represent 63 percent of all the graduates of these institutes, whereas male graduates represent only 37 percent of the total number.

By considering these two indicators we conclude that so far, Kuwaiti women represent almost 62 percent of all the graduates of technical institutes--after secondary school--and the colleges of the University of Kuwait. Males, however, represent 38 percent of those graduates (Appendices 1, 2). Even if we were to take into account the fact that some young Kuwaiti males find a way to complete their studies after secondary school in Arab and European institutes and universities and that some females do not study abroad because they are influenced by some customs and traditions, that would not change the general trend of the ratio of female graduates, especially since growing numbers of females are turning to study abroad (Report by the Scholastic Missions and Cultural Relations Administration: the Ministry of Education, 1979).

If the previous indicators can explain the potential Kuwaiti women have as citizens who can contribute to the process of devising development policies, what remains to be done is that we look into the extent to which Kuwaiti women are actually performing that role through their leadership and executive positions in society.

It has generally been noticed that administrative leaders in Kuwait are either older people who did not get enough education and training to assume their responsibilities competently and effectively, or young educated people who lack experience and training. It has also been noticed that administrative leaders who come from other countries did not blend in Kuwaiti society and did not become sufficiently stable. Of all the groups coming into Kuwait from foreign countries this group has the least sense of security and stability.

Many reports indicate that in the early eighties Kuwait is expected to experience a clear-cut shortage in administrative leaders. A study by the Planning Council estimates that Kuwait will need 2,550 managers in 1980. The study also estimates that Kuwait will need 4,000 executive directors in government. As the following table indicates, one notices in general that Kuwait's need for these groups grows every year.

#### Kuwait's Need for General Managers and Executive Directors in the Government Sector

	<u>1975</u>	<u>1980</u>
Managers	2,135	2,550
Executive Directors	2,350	4,000



If we were to look for women among managers and executive directors in state institutions, we would conclude the truth that women's role in these two groups is extremely limited. There are no more than 50 women among these groups. Accordingly, their influence and their contributions as leaders and executives in the process of determining development policies is also limited (Survey of Manpower in the Government Sector, the Ministry of Planning, February 1978).

The limited character of this role may be due to the fact that Kuwaiti women entered the field of work and employment rather recently. Therefore, they have no predecessors in this area. But the coming years will bring about a noticeable change in this regard, especially with the existence of successful models of a number of Kuwaiti women who are in leadership positions as administrators and executives. They have proven their competence and their abilities in this regard not only nationally, but also internationally as well.

#### Women's Absence from Development Efforts

Kuwait AL-SIYASAH in Arabic 30 Jan 82 p 22

[Part Two of Article by Dr Nasif 'Abd-al-Khaliq]

[Text] 2. Popular Participation

It may be evident that [the concept of] national participation means something more far-reaching and more profound than that of political participation, since the latter is considered an advanced level of national participation. This mostly occurs when women's role in society, confirmed by the direct contributions they make to the questions of development, is such that their role and presence can only be extended into the area of laws and statutes that regulate the life and affairs of society.

Women's involvement in national participation is considered an essential step that would propel them into political participation. These organizations, societies and agencies through which women become involved in the affairs of their community are considered training grounds where women receive the preparations they need to undertake their political role and establish their political rights: their right to vote and to nominate themselves.

National participation is one of the means by which development can be expedited in many countries of the developing world and the advanced world as well. In developing countries this participation was the principal means by which rural areas were developed and advanced. In advanced countries national participation improved the living conditions of people residing in the poor and backward areas of industrial cities in the United States, in Canada and in many European countries.

This participation assumes various forms and has various objectives. It derives its forms and its objectives from the conditions that exist in a society and from the challenges that that society is facing. Accordingly, national participation ceases to be that when it becomes divorced from the aspirations of society, when it becomes isolated from its problems or if the goals of a particular social group or segment were made to be the focal point of this participation and the prime focus of its discussion.

In this way one can contemplate the proportions of national participation going on in two directions:

The first direction is a horizontal one. It takes place among citizens who work together in a spirit that fosters compatibility, solidarity and a desire for common action for the purpose of developing society.

The second direction is a vertical one in which citizens' efforts--on the horizontal level--complement the efforts made by government and official agencies for the purpose of improving economic, cultural and social conditions for citizens.

There are many areas in which women can make effective and fruitful contributions. These are areas for which the government with its various agencies and institutions--even if capabilities were available--cannot assume sole responsibility. Regardless of the efforts made by government, these efforts are likely to be aborted and to fail if citizens are not enthusiastic about working together and do not cooperate with each other to make these missions succeed.

Women by nature and by virtue of their influence and their role in society are candidates for this principal role in national participation. Women are mothers, wives, sisters and teachers; they can play an effective and a basic role in these areas that are set forth.

It is a fact sensed by many people that Kuwaiti women and some women's societies have dropped out of these areas of activity, favoring others which we do not claim are not important. However, we do see these areas as secondary in importance because they do not directly affect or expedite development questions. Now many people have the impression that the public activities of Kuwaiti women are mostly dominated by manifestations of affluence and afternoon tea conversations.

If the purpose of this study is to involve women in development and in development issues, it becomes essential that the efforts of Kuwaiti women's societies and organizations be coordinated with those of comparable agencies or with agencies whose activities are related to those of the state's institutions and agencies. Furthermore, women must be represented on the boards, committees and organizations that are concerned with determining the objectives of development and devising its policies and its plans.

Women's representation on these boards and committees must not be honorary and ceremonial, for then the means would kill the end. The purpose of women's representation must actually be to stir up half of society. Their opinions and points of view on development issues are to be explored. This requires that linkage of some sort be established between those who are chosen to work on these boards and committees and those who work in other areas where Kuwaiti women share their opinions and their work on a regular basis.

## In Step with Development

Kuwait AL-SIYASAH in Arabic 1 Feb 82 p 22

[Part Four of Article by Dr Nasif 'Abd-al-Khaliq]\*

[Text] Women and the Work Force in the Government of Kuwait

We have already reviewed the contributions of Kuwaiti women to the work force in general. It would be useful now to become more specific and to review women's contributions to the government sector. This is the sector that has close ties to development administration. Most of the responsibilities of development are charged to that sector. Studies show that in 1972 Kuwaiti women made up 11.9 percent of the government work force; in 1976 they made up 18.2 percent of all groups of workers in the government: white-collar workers and employees and blue-collar workers.

### The Distribution of the Government Work Force According to Sex

	<u>Number</u>	<u>1972</u> <u>Percentage</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>1976</u> <u>Percentage</u>
Males	30,464	88.1	38,275	81.8
Females	4,113	11.9	8,494	18.2
Total	34,577	100	46,769	100

The following observations may be made regarding the characteristics of the Kuwaiti female force in the government sector:

1. Women educational qualifications are distinguished. In 1976, 43.2 percent of Kuwaiti women had secondary school certificates and degrees, which were not university degrees, and were employed by government. University graduates employed by government were 15.2 percent. In the same year among males employed by government those ratios were 10.7 percent and 4.5 percent, respectively.

This evident discrepancy in educational qualifications between males and females in the government work force is due to the fact that the number of male workers includes both white-collar and blue-collar employees who are represented in greater numbers among males than they are among females. Individuals in these two groups are 18,328 male employees and 19,947 female employees. It is natural for [blue-collar] employees and workers to have educational qualifications that are lower than a secondary school certificate.

2. Kuwaiti women's contribution to the work force is concentrated in the government sector. Also women's contribution in that sector is concentrated in two areas: the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health.

3. The contribution of Kuwaiti women to government work is concentrated in the scientific and technical professions. The number of women working in these professions is 4,603; in 1976 they were 54.2 percent of all Kuwaiti women working in the government.

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\* Translator's note: Part Three was not available.

4. The total contribution of Kuwaiti women to the government work force is still limited. In 1976 women made up 18.2 percent of all groups working in the government.

In explaining the special reasons for the weak contribution of Kuwaiti women in government work, we refer to the conclusions reached by one of the field studies that was prepared early this year. The study was about the imbalances that exist in the structure of the labor force in government. The study sets up these reasons as follows, according to the opinions of a research sample that includes development ministers, assistant deputy ministers and directors.

1. Social traditions that keep women from working.
2. The small ratio of female applicants for work.
3. The fact that the nature of work is not suitable for women.

The Contribution of Kuwaiti Women to the Work Force in the Institutions of Development (the Public Sector):

Development administration is not confined to the ministries and various agencies of government, but it is found in public institutions and economic units owned by the state. These assume an important and a principal role in implementing development plans and making them materialize. Among these institutions and units are: Kuwaiti Airways, the Social Security Organization, the Central Bank of Kuwait, the Credit and Savings Bank, the Kuwait Oil Company, the National Petroleum Company, the Kuwaiti Transportation Company, the Kuwaiti Flour Mills Company and the Kuwaiti Fund for Development.

Although accurate sources that can be relied on in showing the distribution of labor in this sector are non-existent, one of the important indicators shown by a study of the distribution of Kuwaiti graduates of the colleges of business, economics and political science among the aforementioned agencies may be pointed out. This distribution showed that male graduates make up 54.5 percent [of the labor force in this sector] and female graduates 45.5 percent. This means the Kuwaiti women are not lagging behind Kuwaiti men in assuming responsibilities of employment in this sector, which is directly tied to the functions of development.

Although we are interested in the organizations of development administration and in measuring the extent of women's contributions to the work force in these organizations, this does not mean that reference will not be made to the fact that in the economic units of the private sector the same former study showed that Kuwaiti women played an advanced role in the various areas of work. In a sample study that included the National Bank of Kuwait, the Commercial Bank, the National Bank, the Gulf Bank, the Kuwait Insurance Company and the United Real Estate Company, male graduates of the College of Business represented 47 percent of all graduates of that college who were working in these agencies. Females, however, made up 53 percent of the total.

## Working Women Curb Immigration

Kuwait AL-SIYASAH in Arabic 2 Feb 82 p 18

[Part Five of Article by Dr Nasif 'Abd-al-Khaliq]

[Text] 2. Developing Attitudes Suitable to the Process of Development:

Kuwait, like many other developing countries, especially the oil countries in the Gulf area and in the Arabian Peninsula, is faced with a number of negative attitudes that are not suitable to development administration. At the same time, Kuwait also lacks a number of positive attitudes that would support the process of development and increase possibilities of its success.

Kuwaiti women can correct those attitudes that are not consistent with the requirements of development. At the same time they can develop a number of new attitudes which can expedite development and increase its effectiveness.

Overspending, for example, has become a distinguishing feature of many women in Kuwait. The manifestations of affluence with which women are now surrounding themselves waste much of women's time and money in a manner unknown to [other] women in many advanced countries. Although the present generation may have the right to enjoy and appreciate the blessings which God Almighty has bestowed on this homeland, [true] appreciation of the blessings of God is accomplished by preserving and developing those blessings and giving them their due.

The present role of homemakers is more of a consumer role than a productive one. Although the work of homemakers in other countries may be classified by adding its real value to the national revenue and to the family's income, the matter in Kuwait is considerably different. Kuwaiti women have turned over the affairs of their households and the bringing up of their children to others, and they have nothing left for them but chitchat that begins in the morning and ends at night.

The lives of full-time homemakers who devote their efforts to the affairs of their homes and their families provide a real addition to the income of families. This is one form of participation in production. We do not object to educated Kuwaiti women staying at home, for they are more capable than others of managing their homes, bringing up their children and carrying out their duties as successful homemakers. At the same time [educated Kuwaiti women who are full-time homemakers] can participate in many projects that serve the environment, and they can take part in public activities as well. However, the fact that should not be forgotten is that at the present time there are about 100,000 Kuwaiti homemakers who do not work. This is happening at a time when reliance on a labor force coming from foreign countries is continuing to grow. This has made some planning officials call attention to the results of such growth by saying that what Kuwait was presently going through was not [a phase] in which an immigrant work force was coming from abroad, but rather a full-fledged migration of the population. This requires serious consideration of the nature of the demographic composition as reflected by the rate of its contribution and by its influence on development.

As a result of this, one Kuwaiti woman going into the labor force could save Kuwait from having to bring a whole family into the country. These families come

from abroad, and only the men in those families go to work. Furthermore, the employment of women reduces the pressure on the state's facilities and services. As important as this matter is, however, it does not worry us. There is evidence [to suggest] that Kuwaiti women are turning toward employment to a large degree under the influence of some economic pressures which Kuwaiti families are now facing, such as the housing problem and limited housing space where some families share the same house. Resources are not enough to meet growing needs and aspirations. About 45 percent of females whose ages are 18 to 30 are not married.

Finally, the attitudes that are appropriate to the process of development are not those that are pursued by Kuwaiti women. Nor are Kuwaiti women instilling in their children and in those around them those attitudes that are appropriate. Children learn their attitudes first from their mothers whose instructions shape the attitudes of children as well as their views of what is around them.

A new outlook and new attitudes must be created and developed in the lives of Kuwaiti families. Women are the direct means by which such attitudes can be developed in numerous areas such as eating, clothing, housing, recreation, the outlook on the value of time, the obligations of citizenship, large dowries and many other things.

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## YOUNG WOMEN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD MARRIAGE DISCUSSED

Manama AL-BAHRAIN in Arabic No 665, 3 Jun 82 p 46

[Editorial by Hanan: "An Opinion"]

[Text] These days many of our young women, if not most of them, believe that a wealthy husband is the key to happiness. Many servants would provide one with comfort; a home would give one a sense of prosperity; and luxurious cars would satisfy one's ambition and one's love for vanity and appearances, giving one this splendid sense of being better than others. Besides, one would not have a sense of suffering or need which destroys the spirit and kills any hope for life. A young woman would not experience these negative, destructive feelings if she were fortunate enough to marry a wealthy man.

Naturally, with such criteria and in the light of these standards, the only means by which happiness can be provided in life and a rosy future [ensured] in which suffering would be unknown lies in marriage to a wealthy man. This is the idea that is controlling the minds of most young women today.

Those ideas that state that married life is a partnership between two people and a joint struggle to achieve what they hope for, or the proverb which states, "Take them as poor as they come, and God will enrich you," are merely worn out points of view that do not conform to contemporary life and its requirements, according to the opinion of those people.

Hence marriage for today's young women has become the problem which it was not in the past. Hence also emerged the problem of "old maids" among our young women because opportunities for wealth no longer stir up the feelings of all our young men. If every young woman today were waiting for a prince charming who talks only in millions, in the jargon of check books, banks and stocks; a prince charming who will offer her a palace, servants and luxurious cars; a prince charming who will spare her hands from the task of washing dishes and her nerves from the task of rearing children; a prince charming mounted on a white horse who will fly her around the world--if every young woman today were to think in this fairy tale manner--she would continue to wait until she misses the marriage boat. She would then find herself a mere new number added to the list of "old maids."

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## SAUDI MARRIAGE OFFICIAL DISCUSSES DOWRY PROBLEM

Jiddah 'UKAZ in Arabic 15 Mar 82 p 2

[Interview with Marriage Official in al-Kharj by Ahmad al-Saqyan, prepared by 'Abd-al-Karim Ya'qub: "Marriage Official in al-Kharj Talks about Young People, Marriage, Expensive Dowries; Despite Differences in Marriage Customs among Urban and Desert Dwellers, Both Spend Too Much Money"]

[Text] To my knowledge the largest dowry that was requested was 100,000 riyals; the smallest dowry was 7,000 riyals.  
Mean-spirited people tried to abuse the marriage subsidy.

Among the problems young men face early in their lives is the problem of large dowries. This is a problem which most families at the present time have not been able to solve. It is the subject of our following interview with His Eminence Shaykh Salih Ibrahim al-Madi, marriage official in the city of al-Kharj. The interview is about the affairs of young people and marriage.

[Question] Some people think that the problem of large dowries is the principal reason why young people are not getting married. What do you think?

[Answer] This problem is actually the greatest problem young people have. It is the reason why most of them are not getting married or are seeking non-Saudi wives. This makes young Saudi women remain at home, unmarried. From my previous work as a teacher of female students I personally know that young women dislike exorbitantly large dowries and extravagance in banquets. We know that God Almighty forbade us to act extravagantly and to squander [our resources]. At the present time banquets that are held at weddings are extravagant and wasteful.

### Marriage in the Past Was Easier

[Question] With all the problems you see working against marriages these days, would you tell us how marriage was in the past?

[Answer] Marriage in the past was easy and within reach. The exorbitant costs that we have now did not exist in the past. I remember that if someone asked for a young woman in marriage, people would be pleased for her because she found someone who would provide her with food, drink, clothing and shelter and relieve her father of that responsibility. Now, however, people are pleased for the young man who comes forward to marry since the availability of money and the life of



plenty we are living now, thank God, have caused marriage to come to this.

I am not asking that people go back to what they did in the past, but I am asking that they refrain from this extravagance. I am asking that they stop trying to outdo each other in this extravagance. I believe that those who do that are naive people who yield to something called custom. However, knowledgeable people who know that such behavior is not allowed do not yield to such customs. They marry those whose religion is acceptable. Those people also fear punishment. They follow what was stated in the Book of God, "[Those] who are neither extravagant nor niggardly but keep the golden mean [al-Furqan: 67].

[Question] If you were asked to set conditions for marriage, what would these conditions be and how much of a dowry would [you recommend]?

[Answer] The conditions [I would make] are that a husband should not keep a woman from going to school if she wanted to and if she was so inclined to continue her studies. Nor should he prevent her from teaching after marriage. I think that the same conditions should apply to a wife, in accordance with what both parties agree to.

As far as the amount of the dowry is concerned, I think it should not exceed 20,000 riyals, and that is to include the banquet and what is necessary for the bride. Other than that, [a young man may wish to offer] jewelry; [after all] the bride is his wife and her beauty is for him.

#### Urban Dwellers, Desert Dwellers and Extravagance

[Question] Marriage customs and dowries among desert dwellers differ from those among urban dwellers. What is your opinion on this matter?

[Answer] There is no doubt that they differ. Desert dwellers are more extravagant in the dowries they pay; urban dwellers pay smaller dowries. But this is countered by the fact that urban dwellers are more extravagant in the banquets they host. Despite differences in customs, extravagance exists in both parties.

[Question] If a young man and a young woman who accepted each other in marriage were to come to you without the knowledge of their parents and ask you to marry them, would you marry them?

[Answer] They would not be married, since a legal guardian is required for a marriage. The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation, said, "There can be no marriage without a legal guardian." A legal guardian must be present to give his daughter in marriage.

#### Conditions for a Marriage Contract

[Question] What are the remaining conditions for a marriage contract?

[Answer] The conditions for a marriage contract are:

--A legal guardian, that is, the legal guardian's approval of the marriage.

--The mutual consent of the spouses; each one of the two parties has to accept the other.

--Determining the agreed upon dowry.

--The presence of two fair-minded witnesses who can hear and speak.

[Question] What do you think is the suitable marriage age for young men and young women?

[Answer] As far as men are concerned, I think that men may marry after the age of adolescence when they become poised, mature and capable of assuming responsibility. They are then ready for marriage. As far as women are concerned, they may marry after they reach the age of 17.

[Question] Against the wishes of their daughters, parents of young, unmarried women set the conditions for marriage on young men. For example, they make it a condition that a woman live in her parents' home [after marriage]. They also set other conditions. Young men reluctantly consent to such conditions, but this affects them and, accordingly, affects the couple's married life. What do you think about such conditions?

[Answer] If the two parties agree to these conditions, we include them in the marriage contract. If certain conditions are not agreed to, we do not include them in the contract and, accordingly, we relieve our conscience. Other than that, we do not know anything.

Permissibility of Seeing the Young Woman [before Marriage]

[Question] Is seeing a young woman before a marriage contract is legally drawn permissible?

[Answer] Islamic law permitted a young woman to be seen before a marriage contract is drawn. Scholars stated that her face and her hands may be seen in the presence of a "muharrim," a person whose relationship with the young woman precludes marriage.

However, there are people who go overboard in this matter in not allowing a young man to see a young woman. They do not allow a young woman to be seen even if the young man were to send a woman to see [the bride-to-be], as is the case now in our society.

There are also those who [are allowed to] speak with the young woman and meet with her privately without the presence of a "muharrim," as is the case in the societies of other countries.

They Conceal the Amount of the Dowry

[Question] What is the largest dowry a suitor was asked to pay, and what is the smallest dowry you know of that was paid by a suitor?

[Answer] Actually, a large dowry was asked twice. The first time a dowry of

100,000 riyals was asked, and the second time the request was for 80,000 riyals. Other people reduce [the amount of] the dowry in the marriage document. For example, they would say that the contract should state that the dowry was 5,000 or 1,000 riyals. However, I could swear that this was not true, but I do not know why they conceal the actual amount of the dowry.

The smallest dowry that was actually paid was 7,000 riyals.

[Question] What is the nature of the problems that a marriage official faces?

[Answer] After the marriage assistance allowance was founded, which is being offered through His Eminence Shaykh ibn Baz, it became evident that mean-spirited people were trying to falsify [documents] for the purpose of obtaining the marriage allowance. They do this by bringing false witnesses and a legal guardian [to a marriage official] so that a marriage contract can be drawn. However, thank God, this problem has been overcome by insisting that anyone who wishes to have a marriage contract drawn by us has to bring an order for the same from a court judge. It is in the court that what these people harbor in their hearts is ascertained. This way we were able, thank God, to overcome this problem.

[Question] Does a marriage official receive a salary from the Ministry of Justice, or do the marriage parties offer him a sum of money when he draws up their marriage contract?

[Answer] Actually, I do not receive a salary from anyone, but if I draw up a marriage contract and receive assistance willingly given by the parties, [I am satisfied]. I do not force people to pay; nor do I determine the sum of money they may pay.

[Question] Is there something you would like to say at the end of this interview?

[Answer] A story is related about the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation. It is said that the Prophet saw 'Abd-al-Rahman ibn 'Awf, who was his companion, with soiled clothing. The prophet asked, "What happened to you?" Ibn 'Awf said, "I married a woman, O Messenger of God!" The Prophet said, "Did you not give her a dowry?" Ibn 'Awf said, "I gave her the equivalent of five drachmas." The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation said, "God bless you! [Celebrate] with a banquet, even if you slaughter no more than one sheep."

If people were to adhere to this noble tradition, to the pure prophetic tradition, they would have the warning they need against their extravagance and their waste whose harmful effects are evident to everyone. If a young man wants to marry to relieve himself of boredom or [to avoid] the danger of committing acts that are forbidden, he has no recourse but to borrow money. Then when he has a wife, he parts with happiness because he is preoccupied with his debts and preoccupied with the demands people make of him.

We hope that people will go back to do what is right for young men and young women. We hope people will go back to what will provide happiness, righteousness and welfare for their future. We hope they will choose what they think is proper for their daughters; we hope they will choose men who will protect their

daughters and be good husbands for them. They are not to exaggerate their demands for a dowry.

May God grant everyone success in finding righteousness and the right path.

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## INCREASE IN DIVORCE RATE DISCUSSED

Jiddah 'UKAZ in Arabic 31 Jan 82 p 7

[Article by Hayat 'Abd-al-Hamid 'Anbar, Amani Qattan, Khazimah al-'Attas, Sana' al-Ramli and Samiyah al-'Abbasi: "What Are the Reasons for the Prevalence of Divorce?"]

[Text] Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Aziz ibn Salih says, "Deliberateness is necessary in making a divorce decision because it is one of the most important decisions."

Shaykh 'Abdallah . ibn Zahim says, "Marriage builds families and societies; divorce destroys both."

Dr 'Abdallah al-Khariji says, "I suggest the establishment of a center for studying the changes that befall a family."

A marriage official says, "The rate of divorce is higher among educated people than it is among non-educated people."

A businessman says, "Taking to modern behavior that is outside the range of our customs results in the estrangement of one of the spouses."

Just as the Ministry of Information is making a contribution in explaining the problems and consequences of divorce by producing special programs that deal with family problems from the perspective of our society, both the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Social Affairs can make their contribution by setting up social offices that would have specialists in Islamic law and social workers. Couples can then turn to these offices when tension between them develops.

Such a subject requires more research and inquiry, and it requires the participation of numerous parties. This stems from the desire to determine the factors of the problem, despite the fact that these factors are numerous, from the points of view of the parties involved. Such a determination ultimately leads us to a tremendous body of information which is considered the cause for the fact that this phenomenon is widespread.

### The High Divorce Rate among Educated People

Shaykh 'Abd-al-Qadir 'Atiyyah, the most famous marriage official in the city of Jiddah, has been practicing this profession for over 20 years. Because he goes quite often to the courts, he occasionally sees divorce cases first-hand.

Shaykh 'Atiyyah says that in the last few days he noticed that the rate of divorce among educated people was high when compared with the rate of divorce among people who were not educated. He explains this in another statement by saying, "The rate of divorce goes up noticeably among those who have a university education. This is due to the feeling of one of the spouses that his or her educational standards are different from those of the other. This is especially the case if the wife or husband is a university graduate and the other spouse is academically less qualified."

#### Difference in Education Is One of the Reasons

Although harmony between a husband and wife is granted by God Almighty, since their union is decreed and ordained by God only, al-Shaykh 'Abd-al-Qadir 'Atiyyah affirms that this difference in the educational standards of a couple is at the present time almost the principal reason for the phenomenon of divorce. As an example of this he cites the case of a friend with which he is familiar. That friend married his son off to a young woman from Medina. The young woman had a degree higher than that which the husband had earned. The couple had an argument in which they did not reach a conclusion. The wife told her husband, "This is my mistake because I married someone with less education than I have." This led to the separation of the husband and wife and, as he says, it eventually gave the husband a complex.

#### Rifts That Disturb Husbands

Shaykh 'Abd-al-Qadir 'Atiyyah believes that women's work as teachers, nurses or physicians diminishes [their role as] homemakers and leads to the existence of rifts in the affairs of a household which may disturb a husband. These rifts may become the source of problems which may develop and lead to separation. But Shaykh 'Atiyyah affirms besides that many working wives have been able to reconcile their work with their duties as wives without being immoderate or negligent in either, and they have been able to establish happiness in their lives.

When asked about the divorce cases he sees every day when he goes to court in Jiddah, he said, "A marriage official plays no role in divorce cases. Divorce takes place in the courts where a special corner--one of the departments of the court--has been designated for marriage and divorce. The court has designated a judge to look into these cases and complete the measures [required for them]. If there are 20 marriage cases each day, there are at least the same number of divorces."

What does a Saudi businessman think of this situation?

Mr Ahmad Fatihi, a well-known businessman gave away his only daughter in marriage last year, and he is now a grandfather.

This man has an opinion on this matter, and he began [expressing it] by saying, "I cannot determine precisely whether [or not] there are more divorce cases, but what I do know is that there are some cases where marriage is not consummated, and these cases in themselves are considered almost a reason for divorce."

## Difference in Social Equality

Mr Fatihi affirms that families that have a good reputation and a good history of observing customs, traditions and conventions have few cases of divorce. However, divorce cases increase if the two families--that of the husband and that of the wife--are not socially compatible, even if they were compatible in material things. In this case a kind of social disharmony is created, and this leads at the same time to a lack of understanding between the two families.

On the other hand it has been noticed that some husbands take to a certain kind of "modern" behavior which is outside the range of behavior people are accustomed to in their homes. This leads to the estrangement of a wife. Sometimes, the opposite occurs, with a wife yielding to this intrusive "modern" behavior which has no foundation in Saudi society, a society that is known for preserving its original values and its inherited traditions. This results in the estrangement of a husband.

## Western Culture and Dealings between the Spouses

Mr Ahmad Fatihi thinks it is probable that the prevalence of divorce in our society is due to the openness that exists toward western cultures and customs which, first, are incompatible with our culture and our customs in society. Second, they are in fact incompatible with husbands and wives in most cases. There is no doubt that adopting these intrusive customs and cultures creates differences in points of view, and this causes married life not to continue.

Mr Fatihi adds another point which he considers very important and may constitute a sharp turning point in the life of a couple. He says, "In some cases the way in which husbands and wives deal with each other is subject to their heritage or to the mutual influence that affects both of their lives." He explains this by saying, "Sometimes a husband is completely influenced by the manner in which his father treated his mother (the husband's mother), and he would try to put that into practice in his dealings with his wife. Sometimes a wife is influenced by the manner in which her father dealt with her mother, and she would use the same method with her husband. Despite that, social compatibility is the proper basis upon which the survival of married life depends."

## The Absence of a Family Patriarch

In response to a question posed by 'UKAZ about whether family members--especially the father and mother of a couple--help magnify some of the simple differences that develop between a couple and do not attempt to contain these differences and narrow the rift, thus allowing matters to reach the stage of divorce after a dispute is magnified, Mr Ahmad Fatihi said, "This does happen. But when does it happen? In their attempts to mitigate differences that develop between a couple, some families do not go through the "broad base" upon which the structure of one of the families is built. Some families have a patriarch they turn to for judgment. They obey him, and they abide by his judgment in any dispute that arises in their midst. Families obey that patriarch and do not deviate from his opinion, which is the result of experience, suffering and far-sightedness. Departure from this rule or rebellion against it breaks up the family and leads to the absence of a patriarch to whom the family can turn for the settlement of such simple disputes. This ultimately leads to divorce."

Mr Fatihi believes that differences in education--that is, differences in the academic qualifications of a couple--may be one of the factors that lead to divorce. In his opinion this is a secondary matter, and he reaffirms that if the social compatibility of wife and husband were based on customs and traditions, educational differences would vanish and would be replaced by mutual understanding and agreement between husband and wife.

#### Structure of Family Based on These Morals

Mr Ahmad Fatihi said, "It's been noticed that His Excellency the Minister of Planning Mr Hisham Nazir has been putting full emphasis on the moral principles of Saudi society since they are the basic premises on which the social fabric is based in the comprehensive development plans for all the sectors of life in the kingdom. The positive effect of these plans began to appear and become manifest in the establishment of industrial infrastructures and numerous industries, in the expansion of the base of education and in the construction of basic systems. Because of his concern for furthering noble principles and good conduct his excellency tries in most of his lectures to emphasize this constructive aspect, such as adhering to devotion to one's parents, abiding by parental and family relations and neighborliness and the need for relatives to visit each other. This is the conduct that he is emphasizing now so that Saudi citizens would not assume a negative attitude toward them [and] toward development plans, thereby bringing about what sociologists call "a cultural gap." This is when material considerations dominate immaterial ones. [The minister is doing this] so that the social fabric would remain intact and become, God willing, the real power behind sound planning. This would include social compatibility among Saudi families; the social laws enacted by the state have tried to ensure this social compatibility of families against agitation or disintegration.

#### At Present There Are More Cases of Divorce Than Polygamy

[Mr Fatihi was asked] if he felt that the divorce phenomenon was at a stage where it was beginning to pose a threat, in the sense that it was beginning to grow, or whether it was diminishing.

Mr Ahmad Fatihi said, "I feel now that this problem has grown in scope. The reason for this is due to the fact that the real criterion for most people has become a material one. If society were to turn away from this material criterion to the criteria of morals and the family and its principles, we would be going back to the principles that have been followed. This means, as is commonly said, that one would take other people into account."

Mr Fatihi added, "It's been noticed that although polygamy was practiced in the past--it was permitted by Islam when necessary--men kept their wives and did not divorce them. Divorce has a negative effect on women and on the atmosphere in the family, including children. When a man married another woman, he would not divorce the first wife out of loyalty to her. He kept her as a wife since she was the mother of his children and because the mercy and affection God Almighty mentioned in His Noble Book were to continue between the husband and wife despite their separation. At the present time, however, when some men marry a second time, they do not keep the first wife. Therefore, it may be said that at the present time the rate of divorce is higher than that of polygamy."



## Reasons That Lead to Separation

Schoolteacher Hamidah 'Abd-al-Hamid, who has a bachelor's degree in sociology, spoke briefly about what, from her point of view, are the reasons that can lead to divorce. She prefaced her remarks by saying, "I cannot specify one factor that can lead to the prevalence of divorce in our society. Divorce has turned from a phenomenon into a social problem. I am hoping that our universities, especially sociology departments, adopt this problem and conduct more scientific studies about it. Such studies would reveal the causes of this problem which is beginning to become widespread in our society in a manner that is threatening the stability of the family. We must recall what the Prophet said, may God bless him and grant him salvation: 'Marry and do not divorce, for divorce deeply affects the mercy of God.'

"The reasons that could lead to a couple's separation may be summarized in the following points:

"1. Difference in age, even though this is not a general yardstick. We often see cases where husbands and wives live in harmony despite the difference in their ages. However, this difference can be considered one of the factors that could ultimately lead to divorce. This is because age difference means differences in intellectual maturity, in thinking, in looking at things, in accepting the authority of reason and in controlling emotions.

"2. Interference of parents in the life of a couple, especially interference by the husband's mother or the wife's mother. The responsibility here falls on the couple, especially the wife, because it is her duty to keep her husband's secrets and not to reveal them. She is to contain and confine a difference that may develop between the two of them, and she is not to spread it among relatives.

"3. Being less than totally responsive in sharing the human emotions that govern the marital relationship between a man and a woman. A wife must take her husband's feelings into account because married life is considered a woman's domain; it is her responsibility to manage it with her wisdom and intuitive intelligence. She must treat her husband diplomatically, and she must win his affection and his confidence. However, I would not excuse the husband from the necessity of treating his wife well since both of them have a joint responsibility to their marriage.

"4. Mindless jealousy by the husband or wife. Although jealousy is desirable as a sign of affection, it creates many problems if it goes beyond reason, and it could ultimately lead to separation.

"5. Some wives attempt to appear as having a social standard higher than that which their husbands can afford. Such wives overburden their husbands and exhaust their finances. A husband may be forced to satisfy his wife and fulfill all her wishes, but he ultimately wakes up after his debts accumulate. The proverb states, 'Don't bite off more than you can chew.'

"6. Ignorance, and I do not mean ignorance in terms of book learning. I am referring to ignorance of the principles, components and pillars of married life and [the lack of] attention to the home, the husband and the children. Despite

[their lack of education], many uneducated women have been able to manage to have happy families."

#### Man Needs Love before Academic Degrees

Na'ilah 'Abdallah Ka'ki is a wife and mother. She stated her opinion on the problem of divorce.

"Some young men and young women flaunt their educational achievements, each claiming that he is more capable and more understanding than the other. Young women in particular do that, and this alienates husbands and works against the survival of a marriage. Some wives insist on continuing their education [after marriage], and they do so at the expense of household affairs and the requirements of their husbands. This creates differences and leads eventually to divorce.

"Therefore I advise our young women to obey their husbands so they can preserve their marriages. Men need love and affection, and they need to have their wives show interest in them before or without a degree.

"A wife who has recently been married should not become agitated and should not despair when she faces marital problems. She must rather deal with these problems wisely and calmly without the interventions of relatives. A husband must also take his wife into account, and he must surround her with his love and affection."

#### Some Do Not Understand the Feelings of Young Unmarried Women

Miss Ghadah Mansur 'Abd-al-Ghaffar, a social worker, thinks the prevalence of the divorce problem may be attributed to several reasons. Among them is the fact that parents force their daughters to marry because they want their daughters to marry, because they want to get rid of their responsibilities or because of special "financial" ambitions [they may have], such as the bridegroom being a man of considerable financial standing.

Ghadah regards early marriage as one of the reasons that could lead to divorce because a couple at such a young age would not yet have reached the maturity that would make them qualified for assuming the responsibility of a family. They fall apart when they encounter their first problem.

"It may be that the most important problem that a young unmarried woman suffers from in our society," says Ghadah, "is the fact that her parents do not understand her true feelings, despite the fact that she reached a stage at which she can assume full responsibility for herself with awareness and knowledge."

#### A Husband's Conduct with His Wife

'Atiyat 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Gharbawi, who is the mother of a child, agrees with the former opinion and adds, "Age difference between a husband and wife and a husband's ill treatment of his wife prevent the survival of a marriage."

#### Lack of Agreement on a Common Course

Mrs Aminah 'Adnan 'Ashqi adds other reasons that could lead to divorce. Among them

is action taken by a wife without consulting with her husband or involving him in it. [Another reason] is not meeting his demands as a husband and neglecting the bringing up of her children.

In addition, Mrs 'Ashqi believes that one of those reasons is the fact that husbands always spend their evenings away from home despite the fact that they know their wives are lonely and their children need their care. Another reason is the nervous temperament of a husband. Finally, a divorce may occur because a husband and wife do not have a common course by which they can reach an understanding and an agreement on opinions. Instead of quiet discussions, matters turn into sharp verbal disputes, so they get a divorce.

#### This Is the Reasonable Wife

Mrs Ihsan Makki says, "Divorce occurs when affection and understanding between a husband and wife cease to exist, and it becomes no longer possible to mend things between them because each one of them holds on to his opinion and does not yield an inch. It is a reasonable wife who tells her husband in the course of a discussion, 'You are quite right, but this should not keep you from looking into my opinion.' It is in this style and this manner that she should suggest to her husband her appreciation of his position, and she would then be able to explain her position without insulting her husband's dignity or her own. This occurs when sharing opinions is the prevalent method of communication between a husband and wife, instead of that method wherein each holds on to his own opinion."

Mrs Ihsan Makki indicates that marriage with non-Saudi women is a phenomenon she hopes will disappear because Saudi women have a better understanding of Saudi men. They are better able than women from other countries to respond to them and to recognize the customs and traditions of Saudi society. This is because differences in customs and traditions could lead to differences in points of view which create strife in marriage and lead to divorce.

#### Parents' Interference in a Couple's Life

Mrs Ruqayyah al-Dakhil subscribes to the opinion which states that divorce is due to a lack of harmony and understanding between a husband and wife. It is due to the fact that parents interfere in a couple's life; and it is due to the fact that a husband or wife accepts what the parents of either one of them tell them, especially when they have a difference. When such matters grow, they become a burden on marital relations, and a couple can find no way out but divorce, a permissible act that has least favor with God.

#### Adherence to Religion Is Basic in a Wife

In our series of interviews with mothers we interviewed Mrs Samiyah Hasan Na'im, principal of the 13th Middle School in Jiddah. We asked her what qualities would her daughter-in-law have to have.

She said, "My daughter-in-law will have to be religious; she will have to be a woman of strong faith who preserves her modesty and who has been well brought up. I might find out these qualities about her by finding out her mother's conduct. If the mother is a good woman, her daughter will be too. Therefore, I emphasize

the environment. By that I do not mean that she have a wealthy family, but I emphasize that the environment is to be chosen carefully so that it be a good one."

She added, "I let my son have the right to choose his wife since he will share his life with her, but I would not be stingy with instructions that would make him aware of basic and important matters that he may overlook. Ultimately, it is up to him to decide and to make the choice. This is because I know that many or some marriages that took place because the groom's mother chose the bride ended in failure."

Mrs Samiyah said that her daughter-in-law would have to have an academic degree and that she would have to be a university graduate because, as she said, university graduates are more understanding and responsive to matters of life and more balanced as well. Also their education helps them develop what will become a happy marriage, God willing."

She described divorce as one of the most difficult problems endured by society. She said the damages of divorce affect children who are often its victims. She said this problem has very bad effects on the family and on society.

How Did the Divorce of These People Happen?

Let us go back to other examples of divorce cases.

Mrs H S said, "The dispute that took place between me and my husband's mother was the reason for the divorce. She insisted on our divorce, and she forced her son to divorce me. He did not hesitate, and he divorced me."

Another wife, who was married to a non-Saudi, said, "At the beginning of our marriage I was living happily with my husband, but after he got his citizenship, he divorced me."

Mrs Fayzah Ibrahim, the mother of four children, says, "I used to insist that my husband stay with us at home with the children, but he always insisted on going out. Differences between us got sharper and sharper until he divorced me."

Mrs S N said, "The reason for my divorce is the fact that my husband always wanted to spend the evening outside the home. Besides, he did not care about the affairs of the family." She adds, "Among the reasons that lead to divorce in our society is the fact that some husbands have accepted ideas that have nothing to do with our values and our traditions, such as their desire for unacceptable liberation. Besides, some wives do not show an interest in their husbands' affairs. Thus, they do not communicate with each other, and they do not respect each other, so they get divorced."

A husband who refused to mention his name said, "The reason for my divorce is due to the fact that my wife was constantly demanding a fully luxurious life, and this is something I cannot do. This led to disputes between us." He adds, "I believe that each wife has to take her husband's circumstances into account. She should not look at a standard [of living] higher than that which her husband can provide so that such erroneous conduct would not lead to the breakup of the marriage."

## Young People Interested in Beauty, not Morals

We asked Mrs Buthaynah Jamjum what her opinion on divorce was.

She said, "The loss of communication between a husband and a wife and a husband's desire to control his wife and impose his opinions on her without discussion create many problems that lead to separation. Communications between husband and wife must prevail. They must discuss their affairs calmly, and they must share their opinions with each other. Each one of them should try to argue persuasively for his own point of view without being intolerant."

Responding to a question about why some young men marry late, Mrs Buthaynah Jamjum said, "Some young men are interested in a young woman's beauty and give no consideration to a young woman's moral character. On this basis beauty is the first and foremost criterion in their view, even though moral character is the basis. There would be nothing against having the beauty of form complement the beauty of moral character. Also among these reasons is the fact that some young women set the condition that their suitors be men of a certain financial or educational standard. Also the fact that some young men will not marry young women who have a university degree is due to the fact that some young women presented an incorrect image about university women."

## Ignorance of the Instructions of Islam

'UKAZ interviewed Mr Ahmad al-Ghandur, professor of Islamic Law at the College of Law in the University of Kuwait. He said, "Islam as law afforded special interest to the family because the stability and happiness of a family have a positive effect on the stability and happiness of society. Among the reasons that lead to a high rate of divorce are educational and social differences between husbands and wives, but especially their ignorance of Islam's instructions. Such ignorance is a strong factor in [a family's] instability, and it raises the rate of divorce because couples are usually guided by their emotions so husbands divorce their wives for the most trivial of reasons."

"If people were to follow the course of Islam without overstepping the boundaries circumscribed to them by God in Islamic law, and if they knew how much God dislikes divorce when it is unprovoked--if they were to realize this--divorce would be the best remedy to be used in the most severe cases. Divorce is a commendable legal method and the only method for settling irreconcilable marriage problems."

Mr Ahmad al-Ghandur affirms that the problem of divorce can only be settled by a truthful and sincere inquiry into the reasons why this malady is prevalent and an effort to eradicate it. This can only be accomplished by effecting a return to the Book of God and the Tradition of His prophet. One should fear God in the children who are the first victims of a breakup in a family. Both husbands and wives hold the key to a solution to this problem. They have to think hard before making such a serious decision.

Now then....

In presenting this problem 'UKAZ has been careful to poll the parties concerned with this problem as well as eminent scholars, sociologists and businessmen.

Besides, [the newspaper] polled a group of married and unmarried women, women who are mothers or women who work in education and social care and service.

In placing the outcome of our inquiry in front of [our] readers, we are letting our readers at the same time evaluate the gravity of the problem of divorce. Some people affirm that this problem is quite extensive in our society today and that it has had serious and harmful effects on the structure of the family and on the social fabric of society as a whole.

If we were to make one last statement with which to conclude our review of this problem, we would cite a statement by the prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation: "Marry and do not divorce; divorce deeply affects the mercy of God."

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## SAUDI FEMALE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL DISCUSSES MARRIAGE ISSUES

Jiddah 'UKAZ in Arabic 11 Mar 82 p 12

[Interview with Mrs Fathiyah 'Isa al-Dabbagh, Principal of al-Rawdah Elementary School in al-Ta'if; date and place of interview not provided: "A Case for Discussion: Who Chooses the Bride? Most Divorces Occur for Very Trivial Reasons"]

[Text] There is unanimous agreement that divorce is a serious matter. An increase in divorce cases signifies that the fabric of society is being torn, that its structure is cracking and that its values are collapsing. Divorce breeds problems of homeless children who are innocent, who bear no guilt and who have committed no offense.

All opinions are in agreement about this. But the problem lies here: How can the encroachment of divorce be checked, and how can the high rate of divorce be curbed? What are the methods for treating this worsening and acute problem?

"The World of Eve" [section of the newspaper] has shown an interest in this problem and has begun looking into its reasons. The most important reason [for divorce] was [found to be] the intervention of the couple's parents. This was followed by the method by which the bride was chosen: whether she was chosen by the husband himself or by his family.

To continue last week's interview, we are pleased to find out what Mrs Fathiyah 'Isa al-Dabbagh, principal of al-Rawdah Elementary School in al-Ta'if, [thinks about divorce].

[Question] Mrs Fathiyah, will you talk to us about divorce as a serious social problem from which society is suffering?

[Answer] There is no doubt that divorce is truly one of the greatest problems from which our society today is suffering. And here I pause briefly to explain that many people are making the situation worse, and they are not understanding the meaning of divorce. God did in fact permit divorce, but only in the most difficult and the most severe cases where people cannot live together. Today we see that most divorce cases occur for very trivial reasons that no one would have thought of. This is due, as I said, to the fact that many people do not understand the meaning of divorce.

It is natural that divorce would have a poor effect on our society and on all its

members, especially the children who become victims of divorce, living with emotional problems and seeing life through dark glasses.

[Question] We see that some young men are marrying foreign women. Would you prefer that your son marry a foreign woman or a Saudi woman?

[Answer] Naturally I would prefer that my son's wife be a Saudi woman. There is no doubt that a Saudi woman, a countrywoman, can be more understanding of Saudi customs and traditions. And here I pause for a moment to explain that nationality is not the point here, but what is important is that [my son's] wife be an Arab and a Muslim and that she preserve our well-known traditions and customs. If I were to find out that my son would find happiness and comfort with a foreign woman who meets the appropriate conditions for a good wife, I would never object.

[Question] What are the conditions that must be available in your son's wife?

[Answer] The most important condition is that she be a Muslim, a believer in God, a woman who follows the instructions of Islam. She must also be polite, simple, modest and realistic.

[Question] Many mothers choose a bride for their sons. Are you one of those mothers, or will you let your son decide?

[Answer] I will let my son make that decision, and I will only direct him. This is on the condition that my son be fully convinced that she was the bride for him.

[Question] What do you think of today's young men and young women?

[Answer] As far as young husbands are concerned, we see that in some cases young men marry and enjoy all their marital rights in a tranquil home with an ideal family that provides for them all the means of comfort. Despite that, they maintain their pre-marital habits. They keep their [old] friends, and they go out at night as though they were not married. This is a mistake that many husbands make because they neglect to change their behavior after marriage. They must realize that their behavior after marriage must be completely different from their behavior before marriage. I also notice that some men, according to what I hear from their wives, spend their time of rest and their holidays with their friends, away from the home and perhaps even away from the country. They ignore the fact that their wives are at home and that they urgently need to spend this rest period with their husbands in the home or outside the home. This is selfish on the part of men. Therefore I reaffirm that husbands need to change their habits and their behavior. They have to change their conduct as a whole after marriage.

Some young wives have misconceptions about the marriage process. They believe that marriage brings about absolute freedom and a total change in the course of their lives. They do not take into account the fact that marriage is a major responsibility.



## PROBLEM OF DROPPING VEIL IN SAUDI ARABIA DISCUSSED

### Virtues of Veil Extolled

Jiddah AL-MADINAH in Arabic 16 Mar 82 p 16

[Interview with His Eminence Dr 'Abdallah al-Zayid, Vice President of the Islamic University in Medina by 'Abd-al-Rahman Mabruk; date and place of interview not specified]

[Text] At the weekly meeting of the Dar al-Hijrah [section of the newspaper] several important questions came up when we thought about the kinds of questions and problems that [that section of the paper] must raise. The fact that some married and unmarried women were disregarding the use of the veil, particularly in the markets, was one of these questions. Therefore, we drew up a timetable according to which we would take up this question with scholars who have an interest in reform and interview some women in our society so we could find out what their opinions were about this phenomenon which, unfortunately, has been spreading.

The first of these interviews was with His Eminence Dr 'Abdallah al-Zayid, vice president of Islamic University in Medina. We inquired about many of the points that His Eminence raised.

[Question] Can we find out from Your Eminence the reasons why disregard for the veil in the marketplace has been spreading recently? [Can you tell us] how this can be remedied?

### Urgent Questions

[Answer] To all nations Saudi society is the model of adherence to Islamic instructions. We had never heard anyone expressing doubts about Islamic instructions including the legal veil which covers the entire body along with the face and the palms. Saudi women believed in this, but because of the association that occurred between people coming from outside the kingdom and Saudis in the kingdom, on the one hand, and because of the association of Saudis outside the kingdom with people from other communities on the other, question marks have been raised by some individuals whose faith in the legitimacy of the veil was inadequate, even though they had inherited the practice. Therefore, it became urgently necessary that these questions be faced one way or another. No matter how persuasive

we try to be, it seems to me that I and other scholars like me cannot obtain a satisfactory solution [in this regard] if we are to deal with the question of the veil outside the framework of the principles of Islamic law as a whole. If we want to get to this particular point in the proper way, it is imperative that we provide answers to these questions: How prepared are we to accept the instructions? Do we have any doubts about the suitability of Islamic instructions for all time and all places? How prepared are we to accept these instructions even though others disagree with us? If we can provide practical and correct answers to these questions, we can indeed determine where we stand on the matter of the veil and on other matters, and we would not have to be concerned about anybody. There would be no objections thereafter to the fact that questions would be raised about the legitimacy of the veil: Does the legitimacy of the veil depend on unequivocal and authentic texts, or is the matter nothing more than an independent interpretation made by some scholars with no basis in the Koran or in the Prophetic Tradition?

### The Gown and the Veil

And here I would record the answer and say [the following]:

1. Theologians have disagreed on the subject of looking at women outside the family. According to the schools of Abu Hanifah, al-Shafi'i and Ahmad, may God have mercy on them, the face and hands of a woman may be looked at if one looks at them without lust.

It has also been said that according to the school of Ahmad one may not look at a woman [with impunity] because everything in a woman, even her nail, is erogenous. This was [also] stated by Malik.

In his sermon on [proper] cover and clothing for prayer, the Muslim spiritual chief, Ibn Taymiyyah, may God have mercy on him, said, "The companions of the prophet, may God be pleased with them, [allowed] women to go out in public without a long, loose gown, and men saw their faces and their hands. At that time women were permitted to show their faces and their hands, and men were allowed to see them because women were allowed to show them. But when God Almighty revealed the verse of al-Hijab [the Veil], and said, 'Prophet, enjoin your wives, your daughters, and the wives of true believers to draw their veils close around them,' [al-Ahzab: 59] He [in effect] screened women from men." On the meaning of the long, loose gown Ibn Taymiyyah said, " 'Ubaydah and others related that the gown was to have a hood at the top that should be worn close to the top of the head and show nothing but the eyes." The veil is a cover of the same category. Women used to wear the veil which today is known as "al-burqu'."

Women, then, were in the habit of veiling, and in the Sahih of Bukhari women do not wear veils or gloves when among close relatives. But when they were ordered to wear long, loose gowns or to cover their faces with veils, they were ordered to do that so they would not be recognized, for then their faces and hands would be considered adornments which they were ordered not to expose to anyone other than close relatives.

### The Face as Adornment

2. Those who permitted women's faces and hands to be seen set the condition that

the sight of a woman's hands and face not be seductive. It is known that the beauty of a person is manifested in that person's face. Women are described as being beautiful or not by looking at their faces. God forbade women from showing anything more than what is visible of their finery to anyone who is not a close relative and precluded from marriage. 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ud, may God be pleased with him, said that this meant the clothes that are visible.

#### Old Women

3. God Almighty says, "It shall be no offense for old spinsters who have no hope of marriage to discard their cloaks without revealing their adornments. Better if they do not discard them. Allah hears all and knows all" [al-Nur: 60]. Thus, God permitted older women who have no wish to marry anyone and who are not being sought in marriage by anyone to discard the cloak [or the long, loose gown] that covers the face. God allowed these women to stop wearing the long, loose gown that covers the face and to stop keeping themselves out of men's sight because the sight of these women was no longer corrupting to men. It is most certainly understood that in this verse God Almighty was not allowing older women to uncover themselves and to make their bodies visible. This is a matter that requires no discussion. In this verse, older women are allowed to show their faces and their hands. This indicates that other women are to keep themselves out of men's sight and are to wear the long, loose gown that covers the face. To me, this meaning is much clearer than others which may be derived from other texts.

#### The Asma' Tradition

4. The attribution of the Asma' Tradition which states that the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation, pointed to his face and hands when he said, "When women reach puberty, the only parts of them that may be visible are this and this," has not been authenticated. This is because the authority of this tradition goes back no further than the second generation after the Prophet, and that is not authoritative.

#### Keeping Temptation Out of the Way

5. The Islamic requirement that the veil is to cover the face and hands is derived from the fact that this practice keeps all the factors that arouse and awaken lust and the passions in people out of society's way. Thus human intellectual and physical powers can be exercised at a distance from those frustrations that generate in people the factors of lust and temptation. People's thoughts are thus allowed [to develop] in a tranquil and a pure atmosphere where they can do their share and assume their responsibilities toward proper human development and civilization. And people can do this with all their preserved strength.

#### Preventive Measures

6. With the veil being a legal requirement, sexual relations within the holy bond of matrimony are also circumscribed. Sexual relations outside marriage create moral chaos; they lead to negligence in the performance of practical functions and to absent-mindedness.

7. The veil also requires that work for males be separate from work for females so that males and females are separated from each other and better productivity assured.

8. The veil is one of the preventive measures that prevent us from committing sinful deeds and acts, and prevention is better than a cure.

#### The Tradition of al-Afak

9. On that subject there are unequivocal texts about covering the face. In the tradition of al-Afak as related by Bukhari in the chapter on that tradition and as related by Muslim in the book, "al-Tawbah" [Repentance] 'Aishah, may God be pleased with her, said, "While I was sitting at home [one day], I felt drowsy and I fell asleep. Safwan ibn al-Ma'tal al-Salmi who had kindled a fire behind the army, set out [walking] at nightfall, and he came to my house. He detected the dark shape of someone sleeping. When he approached me, he recognized me when he saw me because he used to see me before I took the veil. I woke up when he recovered [from his surprise], and when I recognized him I covered my face." In another story 'Aishah is reported to have covered her face from Safwan with a long, loose gown."

#### Covering the Face

According to Malik, on the authority of Hisham ibn 'Urwah, on the authority of Fatimah, the daughter of al-Mundhir, 'A'ishah [is reported to have] said, "We used to cover our faces when we were not allowed to show them, when we were with Asma', the daughter of Abu Bakr." On the authority of Asma', the daughter of Abu Bakr, she said, "We used to cover our faces from the men, and we used to comb our hair before that in private." This was expounded by al-Hakim in "al-Mustadrik." Al-Hakim said that this was an authentic statement (according to al-Shaykhayn), and al-Dhahabi agreed with him.

It is said that 'A'ishah, may God be pleased with her, said, "Traveling parties used to pass by us when we were with the messenger of God and when we were not allowed to show our faces. When they passed by us, we would draw our long, loose gowns around our faces, and we would show our faces after they were gone." This was narrated by Abu Dawud in the book, "al-Manasik" [Pious People] under "The Inviolable Woman Covers Her Face."

#### Two Important Facts

These texts indicate two important facts: one of them is that the practice of women covering their faces and hands was common and was practiced by the first generation, and this alone is enough to make the veil necessary. The second fact is that the practice of the veil came after a time when the veil for women was not legally required. Thus, it is confirmed that it is legally binding. As Muslims, we have to accept what God has ordained. God Almighty has given us no choice about matters He ordained. God Almighty said, "It is not for true believers--men or women--to take their choice in their affairs if Allah and His apostle decree otherwise" [al-Ahzab: 36].

I pray God Almighty that He guide us all onto His right path and that He help us obey His laws. May God bless and have mercy on our prophet, Muhammad and on his family and his companions.

## Disregard for Veil Explained

Jiddah AL-MADINAH in Arabic 1 May 82 p 16

[Interview with five working women by Suhaylah Zayn al-'Abidin Hamad; date and place of interview not specified]

[Text] Today, we continue our discussion of the phenomenon of women discarding the veil. This is an attempt to find out the reasons for this flaw in conduct.

### What Are the Reasons

In the past 10 years the conduct of women in Medina has undergone grave [changes] which are continuing to grow at an astoundingly rapid pace. Women are showing up in the markets with their faces uncovered and with all their makeup. Women are interested in the appearance of affluence: they are extravagant in their clothes, and they overspend at weddings and funerals and even at simple visits. At the same time we notice that the custom of loading the dining room table with a variety of dishes is slowly gaining ground, and males and females are socializing together at family gatherings. Among families and friends unmarried girls and the wives of friends do not cover their made up faces. Through video devices immoral movies are being shown excessively, and wives are socializing along with their husbands. Furthermore, women uncover their faces and use makeup when they travel outside the kingdom. What are the reasons for these phenomena, and how do we go about remedying them so that the women of Medina can truly become the best models for Saudi women in particular and for Muslim women in general?

This is the question around which our interview is based. It is the focal point of our inquiry. Taking part in answering the question are these women from Medina: Zaynat Hassubah, educational guidance counselor at the Educational Administration for Girls in Medina and secretary to the board of directors of the Women's Charitable Thebes Society; Nurah 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Khariji, principal of the Third Secondary school in Medina; Hayah 'Abdallah Yamani, principal of the Sixth Middle School in Medina and a graduate student at the branch of King 'Abd-al-'Aziz University in Medina; Nabihah Ahmad 'Uthman, teacher of education and psychology at the Secondary Institute for Female Teachers in Medina; and Rafidah 'Arif As'ad, a graduate of the Sociology Department of King 'Abd-al-'Aziz University and a member of the Women's Charitable Thebes Society.

### Educational Methods

[Question] What are the reasons for these phenomena from your point of view, Miss Zaynat Hassubah? Let us begin by discussing the reasons, and then we will look into the remedy together.

[Answer] I believe that the principal reasons for the prevalence of such conduct among our young women are [the following]:

A. The basic educational methods that girls learn in their families as children. It is the family, which psychologists and sociologists call the first community, that introduces and develops a girl's habits, her conduct and her traditions by providing family members as models whose behavior can be copied and imitated. It

is the family that develops and modifies the proper directions upon which a girl's personality is built for her future life. Unfortunately, some families follow erroneous methods in bringing up their children according to the Islamic way, which is incomparable in religious and social education. Islam advocates [the use of] wisdom and good counsel, not cruelty and violence, in instilling the values and principles of the True Religion. On the surface, a family may believe that it is applying religion and requiring the daughters in the family to obey, but this may be quite remote from reality. This is a result of the fact that a barrier is set up between a girl and her family: they don't know what she is thinking, and they don't know what she will do. This makes it possible for a girl to behave one way even as she keeps other [thoughts and actions] to herself. This is because a girl believes that her family will not understand her and appreciate her, especially during the most critical period of her life, the period of adolescence, when a relationship between a girl and her family based on mutual respect needs to be established. Such a relationship would give a young girl the psychological assurance that would protect her in any situation she may come across in the course of her life. That relationship is also to be based on communications and discussions. A family should know what a girl's thoughts are, and they are to guide her conduct and her behavior in a manner that is not cruel. They are to do that without threats, on the basis of candor and clarity. We also notice that some families give their daughters rights before the daughters reach a stage of emotional and intellectual maturity that would enable them to use these rights properly and without deviousness.

#### Copying Intrusive Customs

B. Our young women imitate the conduct of foreign women. They go overboard in their imitation of foreign women, and they take on habits and customs that are not compatible with the values and principles of this pure country. There is no doubt that young women who use makeup, go to market and then uncover their faces upon entering the stores have lost their confidence in themselves. They make up for that lost confidence by displaying and showing their made up faces. They thus move away from their convictions and perhaps deep down they [even] lose their faith altogether. This undoubtedly is a reaction to the poor upbringing they received in their families. Young women whose hearts are filled with true faith, a feeling that entails heartfelt adherence to the principles and values of this religion, cannot possibly behave in that manner. Their conduct stems from total confidence and conviction in their faith and absolute certainty about it. But young women whose families taught them these principles by violent, cruel and threatening methods go out into the world and find inconsistencies in people's behavior and conduct. These young women will undoubtedly weaken when faced with imported habits, and they will begin taking on these habits and practicing them behind the backs of their families. This also includes watching immoral movies. Girls who receive constant care and proper guidance based on respect and persuasion during the various stages of their lives, especially childhood and adolescence, find themselves unwilling to see such movies or even to think about seeing them because they are certain that this will bring them no satisfaction and no happiness. On the contrary, this may make them live in constant anxiety and bewilderment. Unfortunately, however, we notice that some families, or more correctly some mothers and fathers, acquire such movies and watch them in their homes. There, they either permit their daughters to watch such movies or they prevent them from watching. How can a mother prevent her daughter from watching

something she herself watches? This provides enough evidence for a girl that she has the right to watch what her mother watches because her mother would not allow herself to watch something if that was damaging. The conduct of any girl, good or bad, is primarily due to the methods used by the family in educating her and bringing her up. If these methods are proper, a girl is assured that she will not be exposed to the inconsistencies [of conduct] that societies experience. If they are not, they become the cause of her deviant behavior; her conduct and her behavior become undirected, and this gradually alienates her from her religion and her faith.

#### The Religious Incentive

[Question] Miss Hayah Yamani, would you like to add something?

[Answer] There is no doubt that Saudi women must become models for their Muslim sisters everywhere because they grew up in the country where Islam was revealed, the birthplace of Muhammad's message. There is also no doubt that women in Medina must become the proper model and set the virtuous example for their Saudi sisters in the remaining cities of the kingdom. Thus, women in the kingdom can become models for women in all the Islamic world. Regarding what has emerged in the conduct of Saudi women in the last 10 years, I am in agreement with Miss Zaynat that the family, one's upbringing and one's education play a major role in the process of instilling proper religious principles in boys and girls and in bringing up one's children in a moral way that is based on adherence to virtue and renunciation of vice. All these are the duties of families who are counted on in these matters. There is no doubt that what has come over the conduct of women in Medina is caused by the absence of a religious incentive, and this, accordingly, is caused by straying away from God. Unfortunately, this is the product of one's environment. And I will add other reasons.

#### Other Reasons

1. We must not forget about companions and friends who often play a major role in the process of filtering in some ideas or customs. Therefore, parents must watch their sons' and daughters' friends; the proverb states, "Tell me who your friends are, and I will tell you who you are: a fellow is guided by those whose company he keeps."

2. I also think that women's interest in the appearance of affluence, in extravagant clothing, parties and even simple visits, is due to their inadequate awareness. [If they had adequate awareness], they would know that the value of a human being does not lie in her clothing or in her appearance. The value of a human being lies in the proper morals, the Islamic religion and the fine qualities with which she adorns herself; [it lies in the effort she makes] to make people fond of her and respect her for what she is. The value of a human being is not in the most luxurious clothes she wears and the most expensive jewelry with which she adorns herself. We do not deny women's instincts and their love for clothing and adornment, but that must be exercised in moderation and without excess. Actually, I don't know where we got these habits of pomp and extravagance that have recently become prevalent. I do not know the reason for those customs, although I do know that the custom of hosting a banquet at weddings is an old one. The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation,

recommended it when he told one of his companions who wanted to get married, "Celebrate with a banquet, even if you do so with one sheep!" Thus, hosting a banquet at weddings is part of the Prophetic Tradition, but what is not part of that tradition and is considered rather heretical is this excessive waste and extravagance that causes a husband to accumulate [considerable] debts which may cause him to become despondent and anxious. Instead of marriage becoming a state of tranquillity and stability, it turns into one of tension and misery. We, the Muslims, must obey what the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation, said, "The best marriage is the easiest." [He also said], "Women who bring one the most in good fortune are those for whom the least has been furnished." Then we must not forget that throwing leftover food anywhere in the street is inconsistent with the care, protection and respect this blessing deserves. Throwing away food is considered ingratitude for God's blessings. Such ingratitude may cause those blessings to vanish and is extremely reprehensible. We must be grateful to God for the many blessings He has bestowed upon us, and we must truly appreciate that and abandon [our preoccupation with] appearances which will yield society nothing but treachery.

3. I think that the custom of having girls and boys socialize with each other at family and friendly gatherings began as a result of the frequent trips Saudis take outside the kingdom where it is common for women to show their faces in the presence of men. This creates the feeling among people that such actions are not objectionable, and they consider them normal. If we were to consider the danger of such actions and the damages they cause to both young men and young women, we would refrain from this contemptible and reprehensible custom which our True Religion does not approve of and which may lead members of society to corruption. The remedy for that lies in going back to what our ancestors used to do. At that time a man could not see his brother's wife or the sister of his wife. Maybe this way we can correct the corruption that has begun to take root among the members of society.

4. The practice by women of uncovering their faces in the presence of men when they travel outside the kingdom is due to the inferiority complex that many women have. They believe that this is an indication of a developed and a modern outlook. They think this gives them some freedom, but they do not know that they are thereby diminishing their worth, violating the orders of their religion and perhaps exposing themselves to what is unbecoming for Muslim women.

Now then, distinguished readers, the discussion is still continuing about the reasons for the serious phenomena that have recently invaded our community in Medina. The interview will be continued.

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CSO: 4404/571



CLASH OF ARAB, EUROPEAN VALUES CONCERNING WOMEN ILLUSTRATED

Manama SADA AL-USBU' in Arabic No 569, 4 Aug 82 p 11

[Cartoon by Khalid Zabbari: The Arabs on European Beaches"]

[Text] [Arabs on European Shores]



Frame 1: What am I gonna do?...my wife really wants to go sunbathing. She's just like everyone else..



Frame 2: Not me...I spend every summer in France, my moral standards get stricter.

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PROBLEM OF STUDENTS RETURNING WITH FOREIGN WIVES

Jiddah 'UKAZ in Arabic 16 Mar 82 p 20

[Text]



Students upon their return from overseas

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END